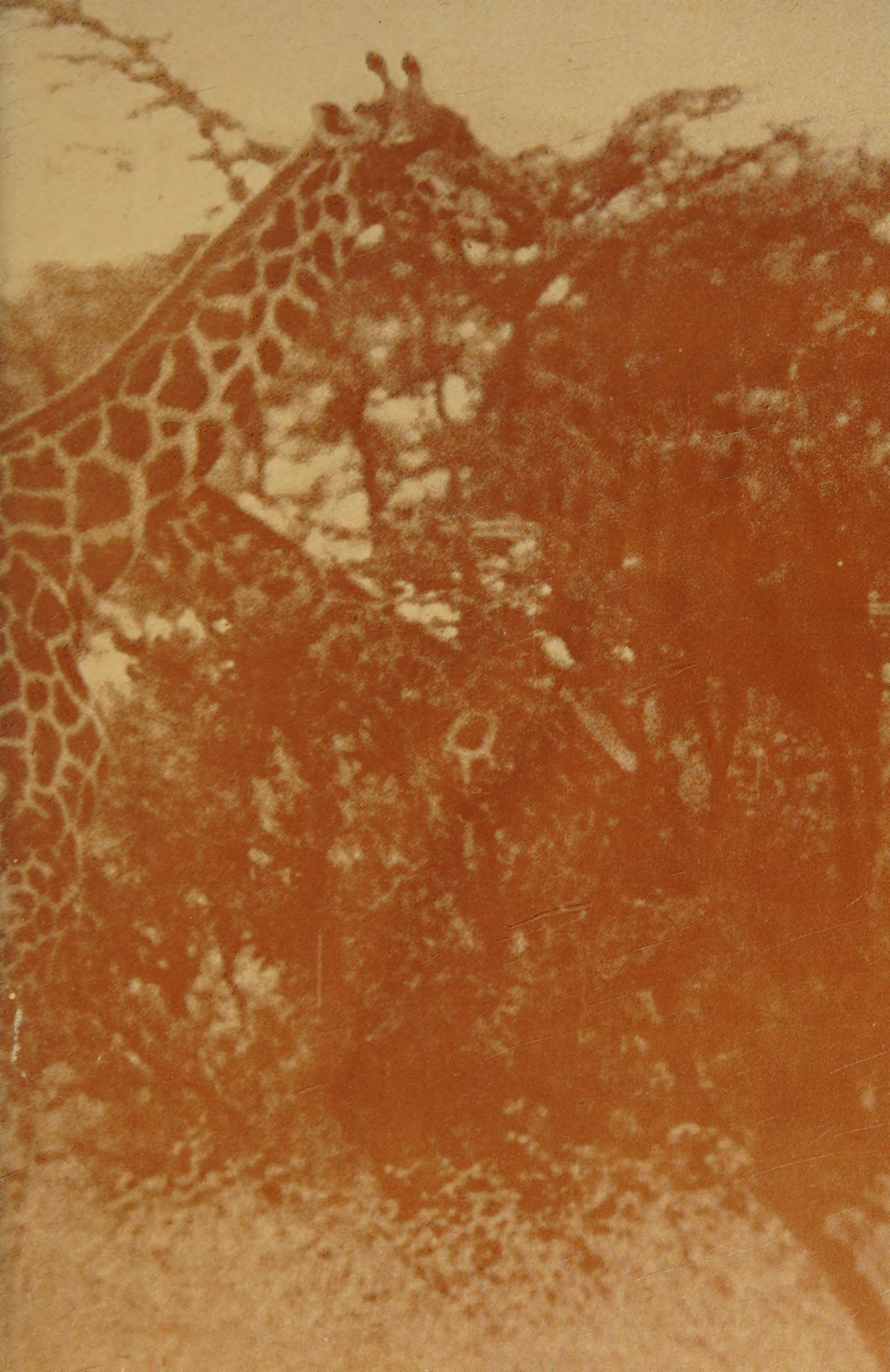
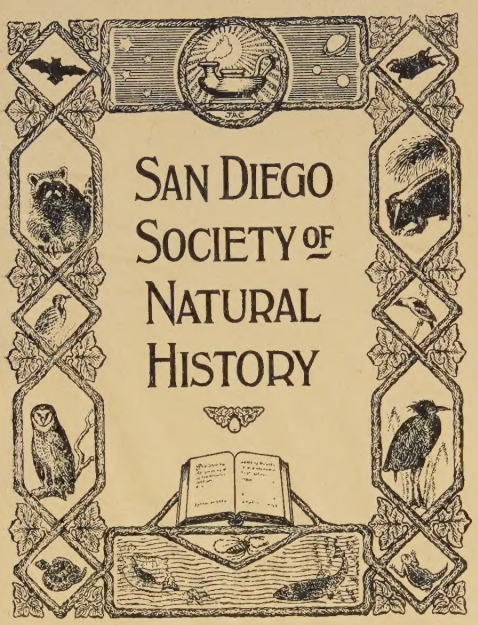
IN THE LAND OF THE LION

CHERRY KEARTON

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In the Land of the Lion

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MR. KEARTON'S BOOKS

PHOTOGRAPHING WILDLIFE
ACROSS THE WORLD

MY FRIEND TOTO, ETC.

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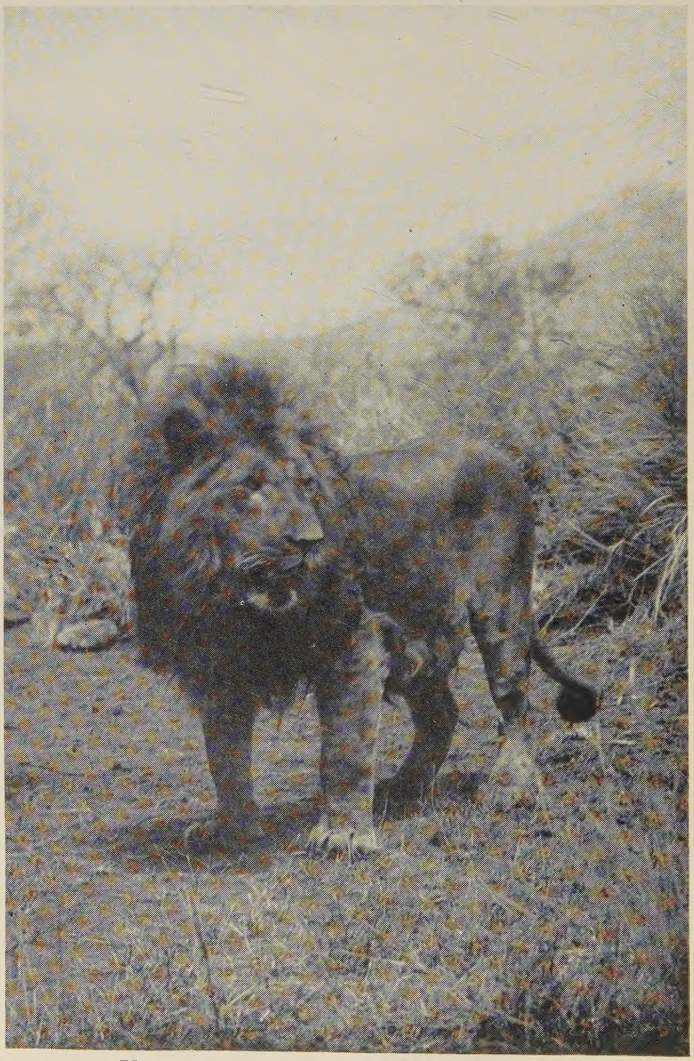

HIS MAJESTY, THE KING OF BEASTS

Majestic in appearance, regal in bearing and mighty in combat, the lion possesses all the attributes associated with kingship.

IN THE LAND OF THE LION

BY

CHERRY KEARTON

Illustrated

ROBERT M. McBRIDE & COMPANY
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CHERRY KEARTON

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IN THE LAND OF THE LION

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To

ADA

My Wife

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The majority of the illustrations in this book were taken on my most recent expedition to Central Africa, and are part of a cinematograph film produced by me for Cherry Kearton Films Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION

AT one time, the title of this book might very well have referred to the whole of Africa, for that was the land of the lion. But civilization and the lion do not agree, and as district after district in Africa has come under civilization the lion has gradually died out until now with a few exceptions he is only to be found in any great numbers in his last and greatest stronghold—Central Africa.

It is of the many types of wild creature that inhabit this portion of the continent—an area of more than two hundred thousand square miles—that I write. There, every variety of country can be found: tracts that resemble English parkland, forests, plains, volcanic hills and mountains (some a thousand feet high, others rising to nearly twenty thousand feet), stretches of ground covered with thickly-growing thorn bush, other stretches where the stunted bushes are scattered here and there with close-cropped and trodden grass between, acres of elephant

grass often fifteen feet high, belts of tropical vegetation and undergrowth, rocks, ravines, swamps, rivers and lakes. And in these varying types of country are to be found the lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, giraffe, zebra, wildebeest, eland, gazelle, buck of many kinds, the crocodile, and innumerable other wild creatures, large and small.

During the last twenty-five years I have made many expeditions into this country, and always my object has been, not to kill animals, but to study and to photograph them. There is no wish dearer to my heart than that the wholesale killing of these wild creatures, either for sport or for commercial ends, should cease. I have no criticism of the traveler who shoots for the pot or to defend himself from an unprovoked attack. Nor is my major criticism against the serious-minded big-game hunter who, whatever he does, has no love for indiscriminate killing. But I condemn the local resident who shoots a zebra because he can get the sum of five shillings for its skin and kills the harmless hippo, bobbing in the water,

because he wants to test his marksmanship.

Unfortunately there is not the slightest doubt that this kind of thing is on the increase. Six years ago, in the Introduction to my book *Photographing Wild Life Across the World*, I said that "animal life (in Africa) is disappearing at a rate that would astonish the most casual observer." To my great regret I must now record that the present position is even worse. And the reason is, to a large extent, the introduction of the motor-car as an aid to the week-end sportsman. In the old days, the number of miles that a man could march limited the number of animals that he shot: but to-day he can travel many times that distance by car.

Being something of an optimist, I let myself hope that the day will come when all men will realize that animal life is not theirs to take. But we are very far from adopting that view at present. To many of my readers—and I hope to most—it will seem scarcely credible, yet it is a fact, that during the war, in German East Africa, I had forcibly to restrain a party of officers from firing into a herd of giraffe with a Lewis gun!

From various passages in this book it will be apparent that something is certainly being done to preserve the animals of Africa. There are game reserves, for instance (and the reader should realize, by the way, that a reserve is not a fenced-in enclosure, but a tract of land whose limits are purely geographical, where killing is forbidden); but that is not sufficient. Nor is it enough to attempt to limit shooting by the issue of £100 licenses permitting only a certain number of victims: for not every man is conscientious and it unquestionably happens at times that a man limited to, let us say, four of a particular animal will shoot those four and then, on finding a fifth and a sixth with finer heads, will shoot them and discard two of his earlier trophies. Only the presence of a Government supervisor with each party could eliminate the chance of such conduct.

You will not preserve wild life by licenses nor by shutting off certain areas; you will save it only by altering the popular point of view, so that indiscriminate slaughter shall no longer be tolerated. If this book, by showing some of the wild creatures of Central Africa in

their own haunts, should do even a little towards convincing the people of the world that wild life is deserving of something better than wanton destruction, it will have achieved its purpose.

CHERRY KEARTON.

Chapter One

THE LAND OF THE LION

CHAPTER I

The Land of the Lion

THE sun rose behind us an hour ago. Yesterday we traveled far, and in the evening we pitched our camp at the foot of a thorn tree on the edge of open country, knowing that at last we had left far behind us such things as railways, stores and settlements, and had reached one of the comparatively few stretches of country still remaining where wild creatures live with little disturbance the life ordained for them by Nature.

We went to bed tired; but one of the beauties of Africa is its cool night wind, and we awoke refreshed. That is a thing for which we are thankful, since a busy time lies before us. With the aid of a car, we want to cover considerable distances, in order to see as many as possible of the wild creatures, big and little, beasts, birds and reptiles, which we shall study presently in greater detail.

Even as we sit lingering over our breakfast outside the tent, there is already much to be seen and heard. We hear the notes of innumerable birds, and that of the bell bird most persistently of all; a jay, in all its beautiful colors, flits across the sunlit glade before us; doves are cooing; on a tree sixty yards away sits a hoopoe, showing off its beautiful crest; while fork-tailed kites circle round the camp and swoop to the ground to gather tit-bits of meat thrown away by the porters the night before.

Now it is time to be moving. The first part of our journey is to be made on foot, and even as we start we see still more birds—a profusion of them everywhere. That little black creature, bobbing up and down out of the grass as if it were mad, is Jackson's dancing bird; and on a low bush in front of us weaver birds are building their wonderful nests.

The birds are very beautiful, and already we feel tempted to abandon our expedition in order to stay and watch them more intently. But we mustn't: there will be time for that later. At present we have to prospect—to give ourselves

some idea of all the things which lie before us and which we shall stop to examine, one by one, in the next few days.

Look—there is something much less attractive than the birds: a jackal, watching us with interest as we show up against the morning sun. And there to the right is a hyena, slinking homewards after his night's scavenging. The night has been a busy one. Aloft and ahead of us, vultures are circling in the sky—and suddenly we see a kite swoop and the vultures plane down towards the ground to finish the feast of a lion.

The sun is now well up, and we can see a few zebra and kongoni straggled here and there in small groups; and also a solitary wildebeest who stares at us and then whisks his tail into the air and gallops away.

Almost without realizing it, we have been climbing slowly for the last mile, so that now we are on the edge of a ridge, looking down into a small plain. Below us lies a stretch of grass country, dotted with thorn trees, and beyond that we can see a belt of trees and palms and undergrowth which is probably what many

people imagine to be the covering of most of tropical Africa.

It is here that the car will join us, to take us down into the plain; and while we wait for it we look through our glasses. Beyond the range of our unassisted eyes, a group of eight or nine giraffe is feeding quietly on the thorn trees. Out in the open feeds a herd of two or three hundred zebra; not far from it are a few kongoni, several Thomson's Gazelle, and a few ostriches; and a little farther along, as we turn, we see a group of eland, looking as big as English cattle. And there, where a movement amongst the thorn bushes has attracted our attention, we see our dear old friend, Mrs. Rhino, with a baby close by her side.

Close under the escarpment, where it bends forward to our left, tracks in the grass all verge on one point: and there—since in the bush all tracks lead to water—will be the animals' drinking place. It is almost too late, now, for the creatures to drink, and the paths are deserted except for a straggler or two who must have come from afar and arrived late.

The sun is getting warmer behind our backs,

and the animals in the valley, too, are beginning to feel it. The eland have strung out into a line and are slowly working towards the sheltering trees. Under that big thorn bush alone in the center of the plain, about twenty zebra stand with their heads in the shade, while two others, with heads turned outwards, stand as sentinels, looking out into the open in case danger approaches the herd. That old kongoni, on an ant-hill, is a sentry too, guarding the others who, not minding the heat, lie sleeping on the ground, like the smaller gazelles, or stand staring without seeing into the distance.

The coming of the midday heat is a signal of rest for most of the creatures within our view. But not for all. See how busily that secretary bird is searching the ground for food, and how he finally takes wing to another spot to begin the search again. See, too, that Jackson's dancing bird, jumping faster and faster than ever.

But the heat is increasing and we have to take shelter ourselves in the shade of a tree at the foot of the ridge. Our glasses are no longer of very much use for every minute the distance is becoming hazier. The very atmos-

phere seems to vibrate and all the scene before us appears distorted. Look! This is surely incredible! There in the distance, where we have just been watching a stretch of dry grass with animals walking across it, there is a lake. Against a background of beautiful, tall trees, exactly like the poplars of France, we can see the water, with reeds growing at its edge. There are animals, too, near it, and—yes, look!—there are some zebra actually wading into the water.

It is amazing. We must believe our eyes and know that there is no lake there, for we saw the dry grass half an hour ago. And yet, believing our eyes, we know that there *is* a lake, for we are watching it at this moment. A mirage? Oh, but that's impossible! We have heard of mirages and we have read how travelers, lost and longing for water, have followed for miles and have died at last cursing the trick that Nature has seemed to play on them. But no mirage could be so clear, so realistic as that. No mirage, surely, could have shown us those zebra wading into the water. It isn't possible.

Yet it is true; for as the afternoon wears on

and the heat diminishes, the lake fades from our sight, and once again we see the stretch of dry grass which we watched with our glasses a few hours before.

The haze, too, has lifted now from the distance, and it is nearly time for us to start in the car, which, as we climb the ridge again, we can see approaching us over the grass; but we are reluctant to go to meet it, to tear ourselves away from this wonderful view of the plain. See, the animals too are realizing that the heat of the day is passing, and they are leaving the shelter of the trees. From a patch of cover a small herd of buffalo comes slowly, grazing as they come. They seem suspicious, for every now and again their heads go up and their noses stretch out as if they are trying to detect some unlocated danger. Now surely they must have discovered it, for they have taken fright and galloped back into the bush. With our glasses we search for a sign of what frightened them, for we guess that they are near to the lair of a family of lions and were anxious lest their enemies should have come out earlier than usual. But we can see nothing—the lions are not to be seen yet.

We are called to the car, and we go to it reluctantly although we know that there is still a great deal to be seen. There is a track of sorts and along it we travel fairly fast, through ever-changing scenery.

We are descending now and looking for a site for the night's camp. But our eyes are too busy to search thoroughly, for there are sights of interest continually before us. There is something on the road in front: surely a snake? Yes, a big mamba, crossing the track with his head raised some two feet above the ground. We accelerate in the hope of getting a closer view, but although we had only fifty yards to cover he has disappeared into the grass and bushes by the time we reach the spot.

On we go, seeing animals within fifty yards of the track, including groups of giraffe: they stand and stare at the car, but make no attempt to run from it. A kudu runs beside the track, but he is not running from us, for suddenly he dashes across the path in front of us and disappears into a belt of fairly thick bush.

The country here is very varied: patches of short thorn alternating with clearings, and belts

of closely-growing trees. As we run through one of those tree belts, we see on our left a clearing, and in the middle of it a small dried-up swamp: and there, not a hundred yards from us, are a couple of cow elephants and a big bull. They are entirely unaware of our presence, for the wind is blowing from them to us so that they cannot pick up our scent: and so we stop for a while to watch them—a wonderful and very peaceful scene.

But even to watch elephants we must not stop: and besides, the wind might veer so that our position would become dangerous. So on we go again. A hill is now running upwards on our left and on some small rocks in an open space about a dozen baboons are perched—"old folk, young folk," babies in their mothers' arms, and old males looking exactly like natives squatting with elbows on knees. Fifty yards farther along, a troop of gray monkeys crosses the road, but the car is traveling quickly now and the last of them will not have time to get clear; so half a dozen climb a big solitary thorn tree at the side of the road. We cannot dash past so promising a scene as a party of monkeys on a

branch that overhangs the track, so we stop and look up, trying to keep perfectly still and silent; but presently we see that a mother with a very young baby in her arms is getting nervous, peering down, darting to and fro, and chattering. Of course, we must not disturb a nursery —besides, it is nearly time for us to think seriously of where we are going to camp.

There is a small stream a hundred yards farther along, and there we can get good water, shade, and plenty of wood for the fires. The bank will do excellently, and very soon our tents are pitched, the fires alight, and dinner in the pot.

It is good to be at rest after a day which, if it has not been very active, has at any rate filled our minds. But there is still work to be done, for tests of the various pieces of film exposed during the day have to be made, to make sure that the light has not been playing tricks. So one of us gets busy with his developing bag, while the rest sit in the light of the camp-fire, telling stories and speculating as to what the baboons will think of the up-to-date concert which is being played on our gramophone.

AFRICAN LANDSCAPE

In Central Africa almost every variety of country can be found: mountains, plains, forests, belts of tropical underbrush, ravines, swamps, rivers and lakes.

WHERE THE LION ROAMS

The lion is often found in the rolling, grassy plains of Central Africa with their occasional rocky hillocks and stunted trees.

Out of the darkness comes an appalling sound, the fretful wail of a restless hyena, who must be prowling around the camp in the hope that we shall leave some piece of meat for him to steal. Well, he must take his chance, and in any case he will doubtless find a better meal before daybreak. But as his wail, like a demented cry, is repeated again and again, we hope that he will soon be satisfied, for by now we have taken to our beds and are seeking sleep.

It is a restless night. Just as dreams are coming to us, we start at the sound of a lion's roar. A mile away, perhaps—but it sounds quite close—he has made his kill, and afterwards he has been to a pool to drink; and now, well satisfied, he is giving that mighty full-throated roar which speaks his contentment.

Then sleep, again; and another start into wakefulness at a sound like the puffing of a steam-engine, which tells us that we are camped near the path of a rhino who has discovered our scent and is venting his annoyance.

Again we nearly drop off to sleep; and this time we are aroused by one of our own native 'boys' (but though we always call him that, he

is, as a matter of fact, a finely-built man of thirty-five with a wife and four bonny piccaninnies whom he has left in his village). He comes into the tent and whispers "Bwana, tembo!" (Master, elephant!); and very hastily we scramble out of bed and stand ready for emergencies.

We can see nothing, but we soon hear the breaking of branches and know that the elephants—for all we know there may be a herd of as many as two hundred—must be uncomfortably close. There will be no chance of sleep for us till they move off, so we switch on the spot-light of the car and bring it into action. See! There they are!—not two hundred, but a dozen, certainly, and there may be others out of the range of the light—just on the other side of the stream. They do not like this strange full moon which has suddenly appeared in the night, and they are not so foolish as to stay before an unknown danger. Away they go, so silently that we cannot hear them move.

Now some sleep at last. Thank goodness, that hyena is silent—doubtless he has gone in the wake of the lion. There are still sounds around

us, but we are far too tired to bother about them. Let them come, lions, elephants, whatever they are—we do not care (or tell ourselves that we do not) if only we can get some sleep.

It is the sun, coming in where the flap of our tent has been opened, that awakens us. A beautiful morning, and we must start early before the heat makes movement impossible. A fairly long drive brings us to the shores of a beautiful lake, where we stop to take an early lunch. There are thousands of birds here, pelicans, cormorants, herons, kingfishers: it is a wonderful spot with so much to be seen immediately before our eyes that we decide to pitch our camp in the shade of a big tree.

As we sit there, looking at the lake, we see a family of hippo, apparently very suspicious and only bobbing up out of the water now and again to peer at us. When they rise they scare some hundreds of coot and other water-fowl and there is a flapping of wings as the birds scatter for thirty yards and then settle down again.

On our right is a big belt of papyrus, and there we see a sight which is comparatively

rare—weaver birds of another kind at work making a wonderful nest which hangs down over the water with a long tube-like attachment to protect the eggs and the young from snakes.

There are a hundred things here to interest us, and we are so fascinated that we do not even bother about the ever-present mosquito. Even if there was nothing to watch but the lazy hippo, we should be content, but there is much more than that, including two very repulsive looking crocodiles that are basking on a sand-bank a hundred yards away.

Towards evening, from a few miles of bare country, the zebra and other game wend their way towards the water, and as this tells us that the heat is now considerably less we start on a short expedition among the little volcanic hills which make a background to the lake. In one of these hills we find a crater lake—an extraordinary and rather depressing sight, for it is a lake of the dead. Dead tree stumps rise out of the water and all is as silent as the grave. No birds fly here, no fish swim in the lake, no animals come to drink. And the heat is almost unbearable. Come away, quickly. There are far better

things to be seen by the bigger lake, only a mile away, which we have just left. Why should we look at dead tree stumps and a silent water, when we can see the papyrus, and the trees of the weaver birds, and the lake with its water-fowl and hippo?

Now, night is coming upon us again. The zebra are calling and squealing, an ostrich cries "boom, boom," the owl in a tree behind us is hooting, and the hyena is once again disturbing the beauties of an African night. There comes a roar that might be that of a lion; but it is not, it is the sound of a hippo. There! Did you hear? That grunt . . . grunt . . . grunt: that is the noise of the hunting lion.

Come. Who wants to lie abed to-night while the creatures of the bush are awake and alert? Or who would linger late in the morning, when there are a thousand sights to be seen? Elephants you can see, and the busy ant, the locust swarming, and the cheetah hunting, the ostrich sitting on her eggs in the plain, the giraffe contorting himself to drink, and the python waiting for his prey. . . .

Chapter Two

THE LION

CHAPTER II

The Lion

I SAT on a small hill in the heart of Central Africa. Twenty miles away, the plain began to rise, and my view was bounded by mountains, with one long-extinct volcano high above the others directly in front of me. There was grandeur in those mountains and I could have watched them for hours if matters of more pressing interest had not been close at hand.

A hundred and fifty yards away, the ground rose fifty feet above the level of the plain to form a little hill which was covered with grass a foot high, with a solitary small thorn tree near the top. On the plain between the hill on which I stood and that other hill, browsed some two or three hundred of the gentler animals of the bush—zebra, kongoni and gazelle. Feeding off the grass, the herds kept a short distance apart; but away on the left stood a single zebra and at about the same distance to the right a kongoni.

It was a sight that is common enough in Africa; a herd of animals feeding, with two of their number standing apart as sentinels, to give warning to the rest at the approach of danger.

At the first glance, there was no suggestion of danger in the view, which might well have been the subject of an Academy picture. But the two animal sentinels were alert and watchful, looking towards the little hill. Clearly, they knew of the presence of an enemy. And I, searching with field-glasses, suddenly detected a movement and discovered what the animals below me knew already.

In the grass under the tree that crowned the little hill crouched a lion.

The herds apparently had confidence in the sentinels, and although they too must have known that the lion watched them, they fed steadily forward until they were within seventy-five yards of the hill. Then the lion advanced, very much like a cat, creeping on his belly through the grass. Immediately the two sentinels bolted and the whole herd, taking the alarm, thundered away.

But the herds were not willing to desert the

good pasture they had found, and in a minute or two they started once more to feed back, whilst the sentinels again took up their position, looking towards the hill and the lion.

This was in broad daylight and, of course, the lion's chances of a successful stalk were small, as the grass was shorter on the level ground than on the hill. Indeed, although occasionally it must happen, I have never seen a lion succeed in a daylight stalk, and since he must know how poor are his chances, I doubt whether he is then ever very intensely in earnest, unless he has missed his feed in the night, as he sometimes does, particularly in the wet season when he is inclined to stay under cover. The day is not his natural feeding time, and I think he hunts then more for the excitement of the chase, than to kill. The temptation, when he sees a feeding herd, is too much for him, and he stalks it like a playful cat. But at night, as I shall show, it is different.

After I had watched the herds and the lion for some time, I went forward on horseback to try to see the lion at closer range. But he had vanished. For nearly three-quarters of a mile

the grass was less than a foot high, and yet the lion had been able to retreat at my approach without giving the slightest sign of his movements.

It is always amazing how a lion, huge beast as he is, can crouch almost flat and come and go in short grass without being visible.

On one occasion when I knew that three lions were hiding in a tunnel washed out by the rains, I watched the spot with two companions, thinking that we should see the lions as they moved away. But an hour passed and we saw nothing. At last we decided on a closer investigation and moving cautiously we went to the lower end of the tunnel, only to discover that the lions were no longer there. To the three of us it was almost incredible, and yet it was undoubtedly true: those three beasts had come out of the tunnel and had crawled, under cover of grass eighteen inches high, down into a small valley and up to the ridge beyond unseen, although the whole of the valley was well within our view.

At another time, I was out alone except for a native 'boy' in the same sort of country: occasional small undulations, but otherwise nothing

in the way of 'cover' except the foot-high grass. As we came round the side of one of the little hills, the 'boy' suddenly clutched my arm and pointed, crying "Simba!" (lion).

They were not two hundred yards away; five huge creatures feeding on what was apparently a small gazelle which could hardly have supplied them with a mouthful each.

It was one of the chances of a lifetime, and I sent the 'boy' back to fetch my companions, and also my camera so that I might get a picture.

I had a special reason for being interested in those lions. Earlier in the morning, I had discovered by chance a human skull, picked almost clean of flesh, but unmistakably that of a native. Two things were clear about it; the killing of that native had been done within the last twelve hours—and it had been done by a lion.

As, then, there was a man-eater in the district, it was more than likely that he—or she—was one of the group I had just discovered. That was why I had sent for my companions, since, with lions as with other things, there is safety in numbers.

In the light of after events it is clear that I

was exceedingly rash to wait on the spot for my friends and the camera. But I never care to miss a chance of studying the lion, and I calculated that the animals were all far too busy with their meal to trouble about me, and that I should have an excellent opportunity to make my observations undisturbed.

But there I was wrong—utterly and completely, and very nearly finally, wrong!

Either the meal must have been much nearer completion than I imagined, or else the gazelle was too insignificant to occupy the lions' whole attention. In any case, long before my companions had had time to come from the camp, a big lioness yawned, licked her lips, looked round, and fastened her eyes on me!

Then she got up, came forward a few yards, and stood considering me, while the other four stood up and began to follow.

It has been said that a lion that has finished a meal is so sleepy and contented that a man can go within a few yards of him without danger. This may be true—sometimes. It was certainly not true of this lioness. Perhaps her meal had been really inadequate. Perhaps there was

merely something in the sight of me that particularly interested her. Or perhaps—and, as I decided at the time, more probably—she was the man-eater whose grisly leavings I had discovered.

At any rate, she quite clearly meant business and she had no intention of either leaving me in peace or letting me get away uninvestigated. It was a position in which something had to be done, and that quickly. If I sat still, the lioness would very soon reach me. If I turned and ran, she would be after me at once and I should have no chance of outpacing her. So I decided to try to adopt something like the lion's own stalking tactics, with variations of my own, and with the object of getting farther instead of nearer. If lions could slip out of sight in the grass, why should not I?

Suddenly, therefore, I dropped flat into the grass. After a minute of lying there with a thumping heart, I very cautiously raised my head and looked to see how much nearer the lioness had come.

Apparently my maneuver had mystified her, for she was standing still and looking back at

the four lions behind her, as if to ask whether they could tell her what had become of me. So far, so good. But the lioness began to come forward again. This time, I suddenly sprang to my feet; and the sight of me, suddenly appearing like a jack-in-the-box out of the grass, so much startled her that she again stopped.

But not for long. It puzzled her, this sight of a man who kept appearing and disappearing, but it must, I suppose, have added to her curiosity. In any case, she came on again, now more steadily.

Again I disappeared into the grass, and now I began to work my way backward, as quickly as I could, but taking infinite care not to show myself.

It was decidedly an anxious time, because although I had delayed her by my sudden vanishings and appearances, I had not been retreating while I made them. It was only while I was down in the grass that I could go backwards, and I soon found that, for all my hurry, she was coming on faster than I could go back. And there wasn't much chance that I should be able to steer myself sideways sufficiently to get out

AT PLAY WITH HIS SON

The male lion often shows an almost human tenderness when he plays with his cub. He will roll the little fellow from side to side, box with it gently with his big paw, and occasionally administer a reproving blow when the youngster loses his temper.

QUENCHING HIS THIRST

When the lion has gorged himself with the flesh of his victim he goes to the water-hole to slake the thirst that comes after lapping up warm, salt blood. The expression in this great creature's eyes indicates that he is thoroughly alert to danger.

of the lioness's path. No; quite clearly it wasn't a game that could last forever. Sooner or later the lioness (to say nothing of the four lions behind her) would reach me, unless by good fortune my companions should arrive in time.

Imagine then my relief (for after all even the most ardent of animal lovers would draw the line at being *eaten*) when on taking another cautious peep over the top of the grass I failed to see even one of those five lions! A minute before, they had been well within a hundred yards of me; now they were completely out of sight. My heart gave a leap of sheer joy. But then doubt came. Did it follow that the lions were no longer there, merely because I could not see them? Might not they too have sunk into the grass and even now be creeping closer and closer? Wasn't it much more likely that the grass hid all five of those lions and that in another minute they would be within charging distance?

Hurriedly, I lowered my head and, now without much care or caution, began once more to retreat.

Suddenly I heard a new sound from a new

quarter, and with renewed hope I looked again —and saw, advancing from the left, my friends.

When these reinforcements came up, we went straight for the place where I had last seen the lions, but there was not a sight of them. Obviously, they must have stopped and have hidden in the grass as my friends drew near, and even as we all went forward they must have still been in the grass within a couple of hundred yards of us: yet we saw nothing. We went on, searching but seeing no sign, down into a hollow and up the slope of the farther ridge; and then, as we looked again over the plain, we saw all five of the lions leisurely going along whilst a number of zebra and kongoni spread out to let them pass through.

This incident illustrates also the fact that the lion is always an uncertain factor. You do not know in any given circumstances what he will do. He follows no rules. You never know when you can safely approach him, any more than you know when a lion will regard you, suspiciously perhaps, but on the whole peacefully, from a distance, when he will come forward for

a closer inspection of you, or even when he will attack. You cannot distinguish a man-eater from a non-man-eater for certain until you are on the ground and he, with teeth bared, is above you. You cannot even be sure that a lion which has never touched human flesh never will touch it.

The behavior of a hungry lion will be quite different from that of one who is well fed, and the conduct of a lioness with cubs will be different from that of one without. And just as you cannot tell by sight whether or not a lion is hungry, neither can you safely be certain whether or not a lioness is accompanied by cubs, for they may be hidden in the grass or bushes. A friend of mine once came within sixty yards of a lioness standing by herself near a small bush. He was prepared to take his chances with one lion but he was shy of a family, and he looked carefully to see that the lioness was really alone, finally making up his mind that there was no doubt about it. Yet he was wrong. Out from under a bush into the grass came two cubs; and out of slightly longer grass behind the bush came the old male lion.

A lion in one district will not behave neces-

sarily as a lion in another district. But more than that, it is impossible to say that two lions, in the same district, and even hunting together, will act in anything like the same way. For the lion, more than all other animals, has individuality. He may be good-tempered or bad-tempered, brave or nervous. He may act on impulse, and no one can say what that impulse is going to be.

Of many animals, one may safely say that one thing will always be done, and another thing never. But not of the lion. To everything that looks like a rule with him there are exceptions, and even the exceptions fail to be uniform. The lion, for instance, is quite definitely an eater of meat; yet he has been known in some districts to feed on fish. For many years I thought that the lion stood still when he roared; but I have once seen a lion roaring[1] as

[1] Nothing is more difficult to describe than a sound. One speaks of the lion's roar; but the word is used loosely. The lion has three kinds of roar, which are entirely distinct. One is a kind of grunt, repeated again and again when he is hunting. The second is an angry and blood-curdling sound used when he is killing. The third is really a roar, repeated in ever-growing volume and then gradually dying away, and that indicates triumph and self-satisfaction and is mostly used when he has slaked his thirst after the kill.

he walked along. I personally have never seen a lioness with more than two cubs; yet there is ample evidence that they sometimes have three or even four. And although as a rule if the lion is shot the lioness will immediately attack in defense of her cubs or in revenge for her mate, I have known two instances in which the lioness deserted her cubs and bolted for safety.

Often I have wondered what I should do if I found myself on the ground with a lion above me. I think I should make the greatest effort at self-control that I could manage and try to remain absolutely still and silent: for if the lion could be convinced that I was dead, and if any other man should be in sight, it is likely that another prey would be sought in place of myself —and this time one that was forewarned.

Just as lions vary in habits, they also vary in appearance. There are several kinds of lion in Africa, and one must not conclude that a creature of the lion family without a mane is a lioness, for it may be the male of the kind known as the bush lion, which has no mane. There are variations, too, in color, from golden brown, through drab, to the pale color more

often seen in the donkey; indeed I once assumed that two very pale-colored creatures seen only a hundred yards away, just after daybreak, were donkeys, and only discovered just in time that they were lions.

You may meet lions singly, or you may meet them in troops, and it does not seem to be certain that the choice of company is necessarily associated with mating. It is much more likely that it originates merely with the need for protection. You may see two lionesses with one lion, or two lions with one lioness. I have been within a few yards of as many as sixteen lions together—two males and the rest either females or youngsters three parts grown. Lions that come together in a troop will usually keep on the move (presumably because so many of them might exhaust the commissariat possibilities of one spot) and hunt in circles of about forty miles.

The day, for the lion, is the time of rest and relaxation; it is at night that he is busy. During the day he must sleep, in short snatches; he may amuse himself, as I have already related, with a little experimental stalking and if by chance

this results in a kill, he will eat; he may partake of an extra meal if he has the luck to find something left by the jackals and the vultures when a rhino has been shot and it is sufficiently "high" to tickle his palate; and during the day too he will play with his cubs—a rough sort of play which must, I think, be intended to give them hardihood and to teach them the art of the kill.

A friend of mine once looked over a little rock and saw a family of lions in the open, forty yards away; father, mother and two cubs. Beside them lay the remains of a zebra, and high overhead circled the vultures, waiting for their chance to clear the crumbs. Mother-lion was resting after the meal, lying on her back and rolling from side to side to watch the vultures; but father-lion, like the human father on Sunday afternoon, was playing with the children.

I have had the same sort of experience myself, when for more than an hour I watched a male lion playing with his cub. First he licked it all over and then—like a cat with her kitten —the game began. The lion took hold of the cub with his paws and rolled on his back with

the little fellow on his chest. Then he rolled from side to side while the cub gamboled around him. Once the cub (as children will) was overcome by the excitement of the game and became a bit too rough, putting out its claws; and immediately the paternal paw came down in a smack which was certainly no part of the game.

It is always pleasing to see the care with which lions look after their young, quickly betraying anxiety if they roam out of sight—although it may be that coupled with natural anxiety is the fear that a wandering cub will lead the lion's enemy, man, into the vicinity.

There is a good deal of time for play while the lions are at rest, and the younger ones enjoy themselves just like kittens; for though hunger may drive the lion to raids, and though in the night he is a terror to all the other inhabitants of the bush, when he is full and well fed he finds life agreeable and shows his contentment, playing or sleeping, or sunning himself on some ant-hill, while the cubs play or sleep or eat the meat that has been given them, and the lioness lies on guard.

A lion and a lioness together will stay in the same place for weeks on end, and if they are driven away will almost certainly return to restart their family life in the same place. A rocky glade with thick bush or a small wooded hill is a favorite lair. I have known them, too, to live in small caves, and often they are to be found in the dongas, as they are called—small ravines washed out by rains at the foot of the hills. The lair is for the day and for the cubs, but it must be near to the feeding grounds of other animals so that when night falls the lion —and when her cubs are grown the lioness—may find and kill the prey.

Then it is—directly night falls—that the lion comes out into the open, not to stalk carelessly as he has done during the day, but in deadly earnest.

Unless the lioness has very young cubs, she will go with her lord to the feeding grounds or near to the water-holes where the animals drink, and will do her share in the killing, afterwards very likely carrying off in her mouth a portion of meat for her family. The lion (and here in that word I include the

lioness) is cunning in his methods of attack. As a rule one or other of the two animals will act rather like a "beater," prowling to and fro with terrifying grunts which scare the prey so that it runs almost into the jaws of the other. And sometimes, where three paths lead to a water-hole, excreta will be dropped across two of the paths so that the animals, scenting it, will fear the presence of lion and will go by the third path—where the lion crouches in wait for them.

There are many stories as to how he kills his prey, and it is usually thought that he springs suddenly and silently from the side on to the animal's back, putting his teeth into its neck, while one claw holds the shoulder and the other catches the creature's nose and with a quick jerk forces back the head, breaking the neck instantly. But no one knows this for certain, since the lion nearly always kills at night, when observation is difficult. Twice I have seen the kill, but neither time could I see with certainty how it was done.

In any case, the animal has no chance of escape when once the lion has got his hold. Now

and then you will see a zebra or a giraffe with terrific scars, and you will know that it has been attacked by a lion and has lived to show the marks: in these cases the animal in its terror has probably jumped at the moment of the spring, so that the lion has failed to land fully across its body. Once I saw a zebra with the signs of terrible wounds right down its hind-quarters. I can picture that scene: the lion springing, and the zebra starting at that very moment to run—the lion falling so that his front claws clutched the zebra's rear, while his hind feet landed on the ground—and then the zebra, maddened by terror and pain, lashing out with its hoofs and probably striking the lion a terrible blow in the stomach, so that he let go his hold—and finally the badly-wounded zebra making for safety as fast as loss of blood would allow it.

But it is rare for such an incident to occur. Far, far more often the lion's hunting will succeed, and in a minute or two the lion and lioness, with very likely other members of their troop, will be tearing at the carcass. It has been calculated that one lion will probably kill as many as three hundred animals in a year, and he will

share in other kills besides his own. I have photographed five lions eating the body of a wild beast, taking a pull at the flesh, then wandering round to try another part of the body, and finally settling down, each to his own portion, all snarling together and quarreling when one of them approached too near to another's chosen meal.

The lion will eat his fill, and lap up the warm, salt blood; for though he likes his meat to be high if he eats the remains of a rhino, he will eat his own kill while it is fresh and red. Then, his hunger at last appeased, he will make for a pool to slake the thirst which comes after drinking blood; and at last he will give his great, full-throated and terrible roar, that all the animals around may know that once again a lion has killed.

Then he will probably go back to his lair: but if he has overfed at the kill he will very likely grow sleepy and stay beside what is left of the carcass, while jackal and hyena wait anxiously for his departure. Sometimes he may rise in an hour or two and let the jackal and the hyena, and after them, at daybreak, the vultures, have

their meal; but at other times he will sleep on, and only awake when the sun has risen.

Occasionally at daybreak a lion may be seen rising from beside a kill and making quickly for home. But when this happens, there has been a reason for the heavy gorge that has preceded the lion's long sleep. It is not as a rule mere greed, but a sign of genuine hunger. Hunting must have been poor of late, perhaps because rain has interfered with it.

It is when the lion is old or hungry that he is most dangerous. Then, he may leave his usual hunting grounds and raid the cattle of the natives. Then, too, in extreme cases, he turns man-eater.

If he wants cattle he will dare much to satisfy himself, and he will employ the cunning which he has learnt in the open. The natives guard their herds by building kraals or bomas of thorn and by lighting big fires inside them, because they know that the lion fears fire. But now and again the fires die down, and then the raiding lions find their opportunity.

A troop once attacked a big boma built on the slope of a hill. The thorns were close, stout

and sharp, and the lions knew well enough that the barrier was too thick either to be broken or to be crossed by leaping. Two of them therefore went up the hill and pretended to charge, giving their terrifying grunts. The frightened cattle rushed to the lower side of the boma and bunched together there, close against the thorns and as far from the noise as they could go. Still the two lions threatened and grunted, and still the cattle pressed and scrambled to get farther from the awful sound. And at last the thorn barrier broke on its lower side under the cattle's weight and the cattle stampeded—but not to safety, for there the other lions of the troop had waited for them.

Just as a lion will take cattle when once he has acquired a taste for it, so too will he take man once he has tasted human flesh.

Of course, any lion may attack a man when wounded, or perhaps when its mate is wounded, or when it is in danger. That is not man-eating. The man-eater attacks without provocation, simply for food.

If you came face to face with a man-eating lion, his method of attack would depend on the

distance at which he sighted you. If he saw you at fifty yards, he would charge on his belly, coughing as he came, until he was near enough to spring. But if you came upon him (as the natives do when they are lion-spearing) so that he was cornered and stood at bay, he would stand for a second, roaring and lashing himself into a fury—and then he would charge.

It is not probable that in either case you would realize what you saw: but if it happened that your 'boys' or your companions were in time to rescue you, you might realize long afterwards that in the terrible last seconds, you saw the lion at least twice his normal size, with his great mane standing out and his tail in the air: and that all the while his awful grunt of rage beat again and again on your ears.

Stories by the score could be told of how man-eating lions have secured their victims. One of the most terrible stories of a man-eater —and incidentally an excellent illustration of the lion's waywardness—is told by Colonel Paterson in his book *The Man-Eaters of*

Tsavo.[1] Colonel Paterson describes how a lion repeatedly attacked the staff of a certain railway station, taking a man night after night until the spot became a place of absolute terror. At last three Europeans decided to lie in wait for him, and took up their position in a railway carriage that was drawn on to a siding. For a while two slept—one in a berth and one on the floor—while the third stood on guard, but after a while, as all seemed quiet, the third also lay down to sleep, in the second berth, the three men occupying a single compartment. Later in the night, the man-eater came, found the sliding door ajar, pushed it back with his paw, and entered the compartment in which lay the three men.

Now, here is the curious point. It might have been thought that the lion, having come into a position of considerable danger, would have seized the nearest man and have made off with

[1] The story was related to me by one of the three men concerned. But the mind does not clearly take in events in a scene of terrible excitement, and so more than one version of what occurred is now current in Africa. Colonel Paterson had opportunities for investigating the matter, and I therefore base the following account on his.

LIONS AND THEIR KILL

The group of lions in the upper picture, snarling and quarrelling slightly, are choosing their portions of the kill. The big fellow below has been suddenly aroused from a comfortable siesta in the tall grass.

IN QUEST OF PREY

The lion is a voracious eater. It is estimated that one lion will kill as many as three hundred animals a year and share as well in other kills beside his own.

THE SUSPICIOUS GLANCE

A lion's movements are always uncertain. It is impossible to tell when he will merely regard the human intruder with suspicion and when he will attack ferociously.

ALERT AND WATCHFUL

The lion uses the tall grass to shield his movements. Despite his size he can easily crouch and conceal himself in grass scarcely a foot high.

him to safety. But not a bit of it. The lion, instead of seizing the man who lay on the floor directly at his feet, actually stood on that man while he dragged down the man in the berth above!

Hard as it is to explain that, it is equally difficult to say why a lion after seizing a white man should leave him—as he has been known to do—in order to attack a native; or, for that matter, why, since he is invariably scared by fire, he should once have pursued a zebra right into the heart of a lighted street; or why a lion who once attacked a hunter who had no defense except an empty rifle held across his chest should have swerved at the critical moment and galloped past, leaving the hunter unscathed.

A few months ago I had one of the oddest experiences with a lion that has so far come my way. I was driving down a rough track at night, when suddenly a big lion stepped on to the track only thirty-five yards ahead. The wind was behind me, so that the lion must have heard the noise of the car's engine, yet he paid absolutely no attention to it, but proceeded down the track. Naturally I slowed down, for I had no urgent

desire to diminish the distance between us. Yet still the lion did not look behind him, only gazing steadily at something ahead which seemed to interest him.

Then, suddenly, I realized—or at any rate suspected—what was happening. The lion was not bothering about the car because he was far more puzzled by the strange spectacle of pieces of bush lit up in the darkness by the glare of my headlights!

To put this theory to the test, I moved the spotlight so that the beam traveled off the track to one side—and immediately the lion followed it! Then I accelerated, and passed the lion within ten yards, as he still investigated those ghostly-looking bushes.

I doubt if there is anything that gives you a more creepy feeling than to walk close to the haunt of a lion at night, without knowing whether or not he will spring. And as may be imagined, the horrible feeling is accentuated when you know that somewhere in the district there lurks a man-eater. The natives may have told you of such a creature, with stories of how their friends have been waylaid, never to re-

turn; then, when you have stayed late at a waterhole, you return fearfully, with eyes and ears alert, starting even at your own shadow; and later, when at last you have reached camp and fallen asleep, you awake at the slightest sound and sit listening to the noises of the African night.

Chapter Three

THE ELEPHANT

CHAPTER III

The Elephant

I THINK that by nature the elephant is a mild-mannered creature desiring above all things to be left alone and in peace. But that ambition, if he had it, has not been fulfilled, largely because of the commercial value of ivory; and the elephant has passed through a long struggle for existence which still continues and which has fixed, in the place of his natural quietness, a self-protective aggressiveness.

The elephant is not alone in this forced alteration of character and habits: indeed, it is not too much to say that few of the larger creatures in Central Africa are to-day leading an entirely natural life. A hundred years ago—before the coming of the man with the rifle, and long before the coming of the sportsman in a motor-car—these animals must have lived in surroundings of comparative peacefulness, and consequently would not have had the air of suspicion which most of them show to-day.

Even twenty years ago, the number of victims was regulated by the number of miles that a man could march in a day: but now he can travel five times that distance in a car and his "bag" is therefore at least five times as great. And not only has the toll of slaughter risen, but not every man who fires a rifle in Central Africa is a first-rate shot, so that many a painful tale could be told of the wounding of wild creatures by men who have been either too unskillful or too careless to end the agony of their victims.

But even apart from the actual killing and maiming (though I certainly would not minimize the crime of it), there is the moral effect of these attacks; for it is that which changes the animals' habits.

The coming of the white hunter has destroyed the comparative peacefulness of their haunts. It has created a new instinct of apprehension and of wariness which is passed down among wild animals from generation to generation. It has made even the lion a shyer creature than he was made by his Creator, and it has forced even the most harmless of the ani-

mals to live in an atmosphere of suspicion.

Particularly is this true of the elephant, who for years has faced the rifle and has learnt that man is his enemy. I am certain that if there were still in the world a tract of elephant-inhabited country where the white man had never penetrated, I could walk there, and watch, and photograph (provided of course that I showed my realization of the fact that I was a trespasser by doing nothing that could harm or threaten to harm the animals and their young) without the slightest fear of molestation.

But it is not so in Central Africa to-day. Naturally, the elephant does not distinguish between the white man with a camera and the white man with a rifle. He will only settle down to feed after displaying the utmost caution and even then with constant suspicion; and if he fancies that his suspicions are justified he will either decamp at once, or he will find out the trouble and attack.

I know a water-hole where in past years the elephants came to drink during the day. A few years ago I went there again. Elephants still abounded in the district, for I saw them con-

stantly in the bush; but they came to drink only by night and although I watched for a month I did not once see them at the water-hole by day. Not until later did I discover the reason: a photographic expedition had come to that water-hole in the daytime and had shot one of the elephants as it drank.

It is because of acts of this sort that the elephant is now rarely seen in the open except in secluded areas. There, thank goodness, it is different; and the striking contrast between the habits of elephants in the secluded areas or in the Reserve and those of elephants in the more easily hunted districts entirely bears out what I have said. Where the sportsman has often been, there are almost even chances that an elephant on detecting a man will charge; whereas in the Reserve I have spent many hours in watching a bull and two cows, and although they scented my presence they showed no sign of fear and only a great deal of curiosity; and I have had exactly similar experiences in secluded districts.

Because of this, when you are in the unprotected and unsecluded areas, the elephant is not

to be trifled with. Should he decide that you are dangerous to him or his family, he will not hesitate to come for you, and then, since his speed is such that he can overtake a car traveling at twenty miles an hour, you will have to be agile to escape him. And although, if you were to choose the instrument of your death, an elephant might at first seem less horrible than a lion, you might almost hesitate in your choice if you had seen an elephant holding a man powerless in his trunk, dashing his body with frightful force against a tree, and then trampling the half-conscious remains to death.

Since speed will not avail when an elephant attacks from close quarters, there is then little chance of safety for the unarmed man. When the photographer faces rhino, if he is wise he stands near a tree, and when he is charged he climbs to the topmost branches in something like record speed; but a tree is no protection from the elephant for he will simply push his great weight against it till it falls.[1]

[1] It is surprising what big trees the elephant can push over; but of course it must be appreciated that tropical trees have not the enormous roots of trees in cold climates.

No; one must not trifle with elephants. Study them by all means, for few creatures are more interesting—but be wary, especially if you travel, as I invariably do, unarmed. I have an admiration for the nerve of the photographer who sets up a step-ladder to get his studies in elephant grass, but there I leave him. He is a brave man, but in my opinion a foolish one unless he is armed. I am not, and therefore that is a feat that I have no intention of ever attempting.

Apart from the obvious desirability of being unarmed on a point of principle, I think that it has also other advantages; for it avoids the necessity of trying conclusions with a wounded animal, and, more particularly, it ensures a greater degree of caution. But even the greatest care amongst elephants cannot mean anything like an absence of danger. You may be watching one particular elephant when others may come unseen behind you. You may suddenly find yourself almost surrounded by a herd—and I know of nothing that creates a more demoralizing effect of utter helplessness than the sound of a herd, when it has been disturbed, plunging

about in fifteen-foot high elephant grass, and trumpeting with notes as high as a squeal and as low almost as the roar of a lion.

An elephant among trees is not easily distinguished in spite of his great size, and on more than one occasion I have seen nothing, and heard nothing, until an elephant has moved only twenty yards from me. On the other hand, he can discover you both by hearing and by scent, for though his sight is very indifferent, his other senses of detection (as is usually the case) are keenly developed. The elephant moves with an amazing quietness and makes no sound to prevent him from hearing his enemies, so that if the wind is even approximately from you to him you will have no chance of remaining undiscovered. He may not be certain of your exact position, but scent or hearing or both will disclose your presence and then he will search for you. If the wind blows steadily from him to you and you stand in absolute silence, he will probably have no idea that you are near him; but winds, unfortunately, are not to be relied on, and if you are wise you will have someone beside you to test the breeze con-

stantly with sand or dust kept handy in a small bag.

I have said that when an elephant attacks at close quarters, the chances of escape are not very great; but when time is given you there is of course one method of outwitting the elephant which gives you every chance—you can move quickly in a transverse direction so that the wind fails to carry news of you to him.

Not so long ago a friend of mine was traveling with his wife by car in one of the most remote parts of Central Africa, when suddenly they saw an elephant approaching them along the rough track. As the trees were thick on either side there was no chance of passing him or of turning. They therefore very hurriedly left the car and ran for shelter behind a large ant-hill, taking care that in doing so they got out of the elephant's wind. The elephant came up to the car, felt all over it with his trunk, and finally put his trunk inside the car, feeling about to make sure that no one was hiding inside. Then, realizing that the occupants had escaped, he raised his trunk, sniffing for the scent of them. But the wind held and he learnt noth-

ing; and finally he wandered away down the track by which my friends had come.

During my last visit to Central Africa, my wife had an adventure which at one moment seemed certain to end in tragedy. Accompanied only by a native 'boy,' she had taken the car to fetch additional supplies of cinematograph film, which I was to use in a thick belt of tropical forest where elephants lived. The road crossed two dongas, or wooded ravines, one some distance from the elephant belt, the other just on the edge of it. I had arranged to meet her on her return at the first of these dongas, but as it happened she arrived twenty minutes before she was expected and, knowing that I would be on the road to meet her, decided to drive on towards me.

Coming in a lorry down the track, I saw a herd of about forty elephants with their youngsters on the left, close to the edge of the forest. As the wind blew from the right, across the road, the elephants suspected my presence as I approached and came closer with trunks raised to investigate. I swung the lorry off the track in a detour over the grass to the right, and there

to my utter horror I saw my wife driving towards me, straight for the elephants which, hidden from her sight by the donga, were now practically across the track.

I drove straight for the donga, and down into it. Pulling up short when I reached the other side, I sprang out and almost dragged my wife from her car and up the side of the donga, so that although in fact we were closer than before to the elephants, the wind no longer carried our scent towards them.

It was, I think, the most merciful escape in my career, for had I arrived but one minute later, the car would have crossed the donga and in twenty seconds my wife, struggling perhaps to jump from the car, would have been caught.

As it was, the elephants were ignorant of our whereabouts, but still suspicious, and we could see big ears spread out to listen and trunks waving in the air from side to side, only a few yards from us, as they sought to find the scent they had lost. It wasn't, quite clearly, a position in which we wanted to remain, lest the wind should be treacherous. So three times I clapped my hands loudly—three single reports: and

PREPARING FOR A CHARGE

The elephant is not to be trifled with for he can charge with amazing and disastrous swiftness. Even the branch of a tree is no protection, for the great beast pushes against the trunk until the tree is uprooted.

After His Bath

For some odd reason the elephant often undoes the cleansing effect of a plunge by squirting dust over himself with his trunk. Signs of a dust bath may be seen on this creature's corrugated forehead.

then the waving trunks went down and without the slightest sound all those elephants and their youngsters faded and disappeared into the forest. There was no sound: but the huge herd vanished.

The climax of that story—or perhaps I should say, and I say it thankfully, the anti-climax—illustrates better than anything else that I could relate the marvelous power of the elephant for moving without sound. I am not exaggerating. There were about forty elephants, within a few yards of us, in a thickly-wooded ravine, yet we did not hear the slightest sound as they moved away, and only our eyes told us they had gone.

The elephant is to be found in the thicker parts of the country, either forest with tall trees or thorn bush, or the elephant grass which is nothing more than ordinary grass of a type which grows to fifteen feet, with a corresponding thickness and strength. The elephant goes wherever he finds suitable cover, and I have studied him in the Congo, Uganda, Kenia and Tanganyika—as well as in India and Borneo.

Curiously enough, he does not mind cold. I

have found him at every altitude from the sea level up to ten thousand feet, even in bamboo forests on the mountains where at night the cold was intense.

Elephants are frequently seen in big herds (of any number from three hundred downwards), and there is a popular idea that when an elephant is found living alone it is because he has grown too old to hold his place in the herd and has been turned out. In some cases, that may be so. But I have seen lone elephants who certainly did not suffer from age or weakness, I have seen them in pairs and I have seen them in threes. Perhaps some of them lacked the clubable instinct!

In some parts of Central Africa the herds are very large, although of course it is always difficult to say how many one has seen at a time since they move constantly and one cannot be sure of not counting one animal twice.

A herd as a rule will be constantly on the move, using a particular road which they have broken for themselves through the grass or forest, beating the earth flat, pushing the trees down and disregarding every obstacle. When

they are on trek, a big bull generally leads with the others (cows, youngsters and the other bulls) close behind: but sometimes a herd will consist only of cows and calves.

If you are so skillful or so lucky as to be able to remain unsuspected as a large herd treks past, you will be fascinated by what you see. In the midst of the herd you will see little calves, often less than three feet high, plodding along beside their mothers—and if by mischance the herd becomes disturbed you will wonder how the little creatures can possibly escape being trampled as their huge parents and uncles and aunts and cousins plunge and turn. But then, as you continue to watch, you will see how every minute the mother elephants are watching their young and protecting them, even—or perhaps more especially—in moments of fright. And often, as the herd tramples past you, you will see a very small calf confidently put its little trunk over that of its mother, very much as a child would hold its mother's hand.

Sometimes you will see the young elephants having a friendly wrestle. At that age, as they have little or no tusks, they wrestle with their

trunks, squealing all the time in the excitement of the game. I have often seen two young cows standing with their trunks twisted the one round the other, not apparently with any idea of fighting, even playfully, but as an attitude of sheer affection so that only a kiss seemed to be needed to complete the picture.

You may see, too, the young calves feeding —and if you see that, you will notice what few people seem to realize: that the mother's teats are not in the same place as a cow's but between the front legs, so that the calf when it wants to feed will stand under its mother, throw back its trunk and suck with the mouth.

An elephant herd on trek has set bathing-places, and close thereby it will also have chosen trees and rocks against which, one after another, the animals rub themselves, with the result that the surfaces of those rocks and trees are polished and smooth.

Going into shallow water, the elephants will stand and squirt water over themselves with their trunks, and then they may lie down, with their heads just above the surface, and continue the operation. Clearly, it is a procedure which

they enjoy, but its object must, I think, be coolness rather than cleanliness, for as often as not, directly they come out of the bath, they will start to undo all the good work by squirting dust over themselves, just as they had previously squirted water!

One might have thought that the picking up of dust or sand with a trunk would have been uncomfortable, but the elephant never seems to mind. Once I watched at a small river-bed, where there were steep banks down to the water —or rather to sand which covered the water, for it was necessary to dig to a depth of almost two feet before getting anything drinkable. Elephants came to the top of the bank and proceeded to negotiate it by sliding—a method which is also used in similar circumstances, and for still longer distances, by the rhino. Once in the river-bed, they started to clear away the sand with their trunks, picking it up and then blowing it in a shower over their backs, until at last they reached the water and drank their fill.

I have mentioned how in the Reserve the elephants who were not afraid of man regarded

me with a good deal of curiosity. I think the elephant is naturally inquisitive: you will remember, perhaps, the Elephant's Child who wanted to know what the Crocodile had for dinner. By the time an elephant is fully grown he has learnt, I imagine, that giving way to curiosity means running into unnecessary danger, and outside the Reserve caution takes its place. But the calf has not yet learnt that, and he will come and inspect anything new and strange. A friend of mine climbed a steep escarpment to prospect for minerals, and from the top he saw a mother elephant fast asleep thirty yards away, with a calf beside her. The youngster saw my friend, and knowing as yet apparently nothing about fear, trotted up to look at him. It came quite close, then seemed to remember that it ought not to be straying and ran back to its mother. But curiosity again got the upper hand and it came for another look. Then, thinking presumably that this was something very strange which Mother ought to look into, it squealed excitedly. The mother woke up at once: but what she would have done my friend did not wait to see, for he was

unarmed and he knew better than to wait when a cow elephant came to the protection of her calf!

For all the elephant's fear of man and his readiness then to attack, he rarely if ever attacks any of the many animals that are his neighbors—at any rate though I have often seen him close to zebra, giraffe and even cattle, I have never known him to attack them. They, of course, do not attack him, and accordingly, as a peace-lover, he does not worry about them. Whether he is ever so startled and alarmed by another animal that in the stress of the moment he forgets his natural character and fights, I do not know. But at any rate, on the only occasion in my experience when such a thing was threatened, nothing more violent occurred than crashings and trumpetings: it was a case of much shouting on both sides but no fight.

It was during my recent expedition. I was photographing, one afternoon, when a big bull got my wind sufficiently to know that I was there but not so definitely as to be sure of my position. For sixty yards he came forward till he was quite close and then he turned to one

side to try to find me. Finally he appeared to make up his mind that there was really nothing very much to trouble about, and accordingly he went away, across a dried-up swamp towards a patch of reeds and elephant grass and trees. A hundred yards away he turned suddenly into the high grass—and immediately I heard the sound of his trumpeting, and in the midst of it the terrific roar of a lion.

Exactly what had happened, I discovered from the tracks next day. Within the patch of elephant grass was a little pool where animals came to drink. Near it the lion crouched, ready to spring at the sight of a zebra. Tense and quivering, like a cat, he would have waited with eyes on the pool, for his kill. Then, so silently that even he could not have heard a movement, the grass was parted—and lion and elephant were face to face.

The lion roared—but I, listening, knew that the roar was not only of anger: three-quarters of it were from fright. And the elephant trumpeted—but I detected also a note of fright in his trumpeting. And then the lion turned, and the elephant turned, and they went their ways,

the lion to seek less disturbed hunting-grounds, the elephant probably a little bothered, because an otherwise peaceful morning had been completely spoilt.

And I, for my part, turned too, and went my way, wishing above all things that there had not been a hundred yards of forest between me and such a scene.

Chapter Four

THE RHINOCEROS

CHAPTER IV

The Rhinoceros

A FEW months ago, on a little hill-side, I discovered a very old rhino. He lived in the center of a clump of dense bush around which had grown a ring of almost impassable thorns, high and prickly, so that his retreat was safe from intruders.

Protection of some sort he must have badly needed, for only a few yards away ran a road along which motor lorries passed, and a few miles to the east were settlements with Indian stores and hundreds of the Masai. Old as he was, he would have been of value to anyone who could have shot him, for his horns (which, by the way, are not in reality horn but matted hair) must have weighed thirty pounds, and rhino horn has a commercial value of £1 per pound weight.[1] From his wariness I have little

[1] Rhino horns are ground down and exported to China, where they are used for the manufacture of a drug.

doubt that attempts at shooting him had been made.

The surroundings of this rhino's home were so impenetrable that photography was out of the question; but finding the pool, three-quarters of a mile away, to which he went each night to drink, I went there and watched, thinking that if he stayed late I could get my picture in the early morning. But the old fellow was far too wary for that and always departed to his fortress at dawn.

By that time I was naturally keener than ever to photograph him, and accordingly I decided that the only thing to do was to try to intercept him on his return to his retreat, when the light would be a little stronger.

I found the track by which he came, and on it a clearing a couple of yards across. Close to this I hid behind an ant-hill, waiting for him.

In due course he came, and I got a few inches of film. But I made a slight sound, and instantly, without stopping to see the cause of it, he slipped through the thorn bushes and made off as fast as he could, home to his shelter.

Now, that state of fear is not the normal

condition of the rhino. He will be suspicious, and if he scents danger he will either bolt or charge; but he will not show the extreme wariness of this old fellow, nor make for a thorn fortress to stay there till night returns. Nor is it normal for him to live alone, as this one did, the only rhino in many square miles of country. Twenty years ago, in eight square miles, I used to count as many as fifteen or twenty rhino in a day, and then I spent my time largely in climbing trees to get out of their way.

To-day, in most districts, all is changed. The settler regards the rhino as a nuisance, because he is no respecter of private property, and also —quite rightly—as dangerous. The hunter shoots him for sport. Roads now cross his private domain in every direction. Even the natives see advantages in his extermination.

And this extermination is fast occurring. For a time he may, to some extent, escape, because, unintelligent as he is popularly supposed to be, the survivors of his race have at any rate had the sense to leave dangerous areas and to take refuge farther from the settler in districts where the bush is wilder and thicker. But I

foresee that in another twenty years, in Central Africa at any rate, the rhino will be hard to find.

Once it was impossible to help meeting him; now it is possible, as a friend of mine has recently done, to undertake a journey of thousands of miles through Central Africa without seeing a single rhino except the one old creature to whom I have just referred, who, I imagine, must resolutely have refused to desert the scenes of his youth, even when all his friends had departed.

This may not be the place in which to apportion blame for the extermination of wild life, even when one knows of such incidents as that in which a hunter recently shot no less than one hundred and twelve rhino; but I must at least record that the rhino is fast disappearing even in what is called the Great Game Reserve, where the shooting of wild animals is forbidden.

As the Reserve covers some thirteen thousand square miles and is in the charge of only a few wardens, it is obvious that preservation is difficult. Nevertheless, difficult as it is, it must

DREADNAUGHTS OF THE JUNGLE

Armed with sharp horns, protected by an armor-like hide and possessed of tremendous strength the angered rhino will charge anything that lives. These two creatures are white rhinos, a larger and rarer species than the black.

Browsing in Peace

Ordinarily the elephant is the most peaceful of animals. He rarely if ever attacks his animal neighbors and they of course do not attack him.

be accomplished if wild life in Central Africa is to survive. In South Africa proof has been given that protection—real protection—is possible. And what can be done in South Africa can certainly be done also in Central Africa.

The first step must be the keeping of the Game Reserve for the game on whose behalf it was created. I regret to say that this is not done at present. Indian trading stores are now to be found almost in the heart of the Reserve—and it would be interesting to know who is responsible for allowing them to be there. Motor lorries carry goods from one of these stores to another; and thus the Game Reserve threatens gradually to become a commercial trading ground instead of remaining an animal sanctuary.

Because of these things—the partial extermination of the rhino and the driving of the survivors into exile from their natural and favorite haunts—the man who wishes to study this animal has to follow him into undisturbed districts, in which the settler has not yet penetrated. There, at any rate, he will be found living very much as he lived twenty (or for

that matter, I suppose, two thousand) years ago.

There, the rhino lives in country that is comparatively open. He likes to eat short thorn bushes whose branches are soft; and in passing I should mention that one of the effects of the killing and driving out of the rhino in certain areas is that the bush has grown high and thick because it is no longer eaten, and in growing it has become hard and very prickly—so much so that the mouth of the old hermit rhino whom I found near the road which passes through the Reserve on the way to Tanganyika was torn and swollen because, perforce, he had had to live on the higher-grown thorns.

The rhino is extraordinarily regular in all his habits, and will do the same things day after day at very nearly the same hours. Through the heat of the day he will mostly lie in the shade of a tree, though he may get up and enjoy a mud bath. But in the late afternoon, when the greatest heat has passed, he will begin to feed. Then, in particular, his regularity is seen, for he will browse always along the same path,

about two feet wide, which he has worn for himself from his home to his particular watering-place, with probably a path branching to one side to the spot where with equal regularity he leaves his dung: a habit in which he is peculiar. Sometimes his pool will be as much as six miles away, but he will never vary his choice or wander very far afield, and his daily route will be to and fro along his well-worn pathway.

Once I fixed my camp near the foot of a hill two or three hundred feet high, on the top of which, in a clump of bush, a rhino had his retreat. Every afternoon he would leave the shade, come to a particular spot at the edge of the hill, and slide on his four feet (like an elephant descending the bank of a river) to the bottom. There he would start to feed, working round the base of the hill till he reached the side opposite to that by which he had descended, and then in a straight line to a water-hole three-quarters of a mile away.

When his thirst was quenched, he would return to the hill, but not, of course, to the slide, for although that was good for the descent it

was useless for a climb. The upward journey was always made by a path which he had worn on the side nearest to the pool, the line of it having no doubt been chosen because after his feed and his drink he wanted to return as quickly as possible to safety.

One day this rhino deviated slightly from his regular path and walked right into my camp. There was a narrow space between a grass hut which we had built and a tree, and the animal apparently thought that there was room for him to pass. But there wasn't, as he very soon discovered. His head passed through safely, but there was no room for his body to follow. Of course, the sensible thing would have been to withdraw and to go around either the hut or the tree, but that was not in the rhino's mind. Instead, he tried to force his way through, got badly scared because he only wedged himself more firmly, and finally plunged and pushed until at last the hut collapsed. Then he bounded forward, and without a single backward glance raced away as if the Devil were behind him.

He was very badly frightened by that time,

and it is probable that he did not stop running for miles, for that is the way of the rhino. Once panic holds him he will run until he is far out of sight of whatever has scared him. Readers of my book, *My Dog Simba*, will remember how my fox-terrier routed two rhino and chased them until he was found by horsemen in an utterly exhausted state five miles away!

It is never safe to pitch a camp across a rhino's track, or even very close to it. In my case it was only a hut that was demolished, but it might as easily have been myself.

You can never be sure of the rhino's temper. He is a short-sighted animal, and, like the elephant, apart from the warnings given him by tick birds, he relies for the detection of danger on hearing and scent. He can pick up scent at considerable distances (I have known him aware of my presence at two hundred and fifty yards), but then he does not always know whether or not what confronts him is a source of danger. He therefore has to come closer to investigate and to confirm his suspicions; and as his hearing reinforces the stronger scent he

often seems to hesitate whether to charge or to run away. It seems probable that both actions are dictated by fear. I have known him come within a dozen yards, looking as if he were about to charge, and then suddenly turn and bolt; but on the other hand I have also known cases when, though he might have been expected to bolt, a stronger scent made him quite certain of what was before him and he charged. There is, of course, a difference between fear of the known and fear of the unknown; and it is possible that the first impels the rhino to charge while the second prompts him to run away.

In any case, it is clear that the saving of his own skin is his first consideration. Sometimes, for instance, he will come up against the wind, pass comparatively close to a man, and then, of course, pick up that man's scent; but then he will not turn and charge for he is already headed for safety, and he will race for it as hard as he can go.

That, however, is a statement which requires a certain qualification. It certainly does not apply to the rhino if he has been wounded:

then he is almost certain to charge, directly he discovers his enemy's wind.

Some time ago an adventure-loving lady crossed Africa from the west, and at last complained that the country was lacking in the thrills she had expected. Two days later she encountered a rhino, and although she had no weapon with which she could have killed him, she fired with a small rifle and wounded him. Instantly he charged and killed her.

Then he took shelter in a donga, which was crossed by a road. Down this road the next day came a local settler with his wife, in a motor-car. The rhino, tormented by the pain of his wound, charged the car directly he saw it. The settler very quickly got his wife out of the car and half-way up a tree; but he himself was caught, and shared the fate of the lady who had thought that Africa lacked thrills.

When a rhino charges he is indeed dangerous, and unless one is prepared to shoot there is only one way to safety: a tree. I probably know that fact from as many personal experiences as any man living, and now, if I am photographing the rhino, I am always careful to see that a

stout tree is handy. In the past I have won this knowledge in experiences when only luck has saved me.

The charging rhino puffs and blows like an antiquated steam engine, but he travels fast, and if he gets you he will almost certainly either trample you to death or rip your body with a blow from his horn.

Once I was photographing at night, when the flash just behind the camera so much startled the rhino (and, by the way, I have had exactly the same experience with a lion) that he charged it immediately. Fortunately, I was up a small tree; but the camera was on the ground—and when I climbed down, the lens was all that I could find intact.

During the war I persuaded the native who had many times acted as my personal 'boy' to enlist, and in due course he found himself serving in the front line, where natives served among the white men because the sharpness of their eyes was an invaluable aid to men unused to the country. One day, whilst advancing on outpost duty, the 'boy' saw a rhino mother and her baby dangerously near both to himself and

to the Englishman on his left. In the excitement of the moment the 'boy' forgot his English and shouted the name of the beast in his own tongue: "Kfaru! Kfaru!" The Englishman, of course, failed to understand, and as the rhino was hidden from him by a bush he marched calmly on. Just as the 'boy' remembered the word "rhino" the creature got their wind and charged.

The 'boy,' unfortunately for himself, stayed to shout a warning. The Englishman leapt aside, but the 'boy,' in turning, stumbled, and as he lay flat on the ground the foot of the mother rhino caught him a glancing blow and smashed his shoulder. Certainly a lucky escape, for if he had been on his feet nothing could have saved his life.

Once, whilst photographing in open country, I saw a couple of rhino browsing on a long, sloping hill-side. Two members of my party were out on horseback, and I could see them although they could not see the rhino. The horsemen were too far away to catch my warning, and very soon the rhino picked up their wind and promptly charged. I had often seen the

rhinoceros pursued by horsemen: now I was to see the positions reversed. The speed of a galloping horse is just about equal to that of a charging rhino, so that the chase was a long one, and for a time the horsemen maintained their lead without being able to increase it. But the rhino has not the horse's staying power, and, as the country was flat and open, the horses began at last to draw ahead until, after three-quarters of a mile, the two rhino simultaneously decided that the thing wasn't good enough and branched off, one to the right and the other to the left.

On another occasion in the open I myself had a very fortunate escape. From a little hill I had seen through my glasses a rhino lying asleep in the shade of a clump of bushes and trees, and as by good luck I was able to advance against the wind, I set out to stalk him. I got successfully within forty yards, when the tick birds gave the alarm. Up jumped the rhino at once, knowing that something was wrong but, because of the direction of the wind, not knowing what was the danger nor whence it came. I waited until the settling of the tick birds re-

assured him, and then I crept still nearer and began to set up my camera, once more disturbing the tick birds, so that the rhino again became troubled and stood turning his head this way and that, with his nose in the air in an effort to pick up scent. Finally he decided on personal investigation, and as luck would have it he came directly towards me. There wasn't a tree within reach, and the creature that could chase horsemen without losing ground for three-quarters of a mile would very soon overtake a man who tried to run. Therefore the only thing to do was to trust to luck—the luck that the wind would hold and that uncertainty of my whereabouts would deter the rhino from charging. And meanwhile, just in case I came through the adventure alive, there was an excellent chance for a film, much too good to be wasted over an attack of "funk." So I started turning the handle of the cinematograph camera, while the rhino came steadily on till he was within fifteen yards of me.

By that time, though he still apparently could not smell me, he must have noticed something to add considerably to his puzzlement—the

very faint clicking of the camera. Probably that was something new in his experience, and he didn't know what to make of it. It might be an enemy that he could easily demolish—or it might not. He stopped, hesitated, and then galloped away to the left.

His behavior then was very odd, and for me not a little exciting. Fear sent him a little farther away from me, then curiosity brought him nearer, so that he completed a small half-circle; then fear again led him away, and once more he came back—another half-circle. And all the while he was gradually working round to my left in an effort to find out the cause of the buzzing that came from my compressed-air camera, and to get my wind. Finally he stopped, again only fifteen yards from me, hesitated once more, and at last—very much to my relief—decided in favor of discretion and bolted, making for shelter among bushes half a mile away.

But these pictures of the rhino when he is disturbed do not tell the whole story. With them must be coupled others showing him at peace, for that is the way of his normal life, apart from disagreeable incidents which, no

doubt, he regards as very upsetting to one who prefers a quiet and orderly routine. He doesn't want either to hunt or to be hunted; the daily promenade up and down his well-worn path is good enough for him, and these calls for violent exertion, besides disturbing his rest, make him excited and no doubt very hot.

When the rhino gets overheated he immediately goes off to cool himself in a bath, either in water or in mud. I think of the two he prefers the mud. And then, much refreshed, he lies in a little depression to be dried again by the sun.

If he has bathed in mud he does not wash it off, but lets it dry on his skin while he sleeps, so that—particularly in that part of the country where the earth is reddish—he eventually looks exactly like the remains of a broken-down ant-hill. Once I examined a stretch of open bush through my glasses, decided that there was nothing on it in the way of dangerous game, and accordingly started to walk across it, accompanied by two native 'boys.' A reddish, broken ant-hill lay right in front of me, and in another moment I should have stepped on to

it—when suddenly it stood up! Rhino! There was no lack of wind then, and no uncertainty in the creature's mind. He charged instantly, and I was only saved by the bravery of one of my 'boys' who deliberately led the beast aside and then succeeded in climbing a tree just in the nick of time to save himself.

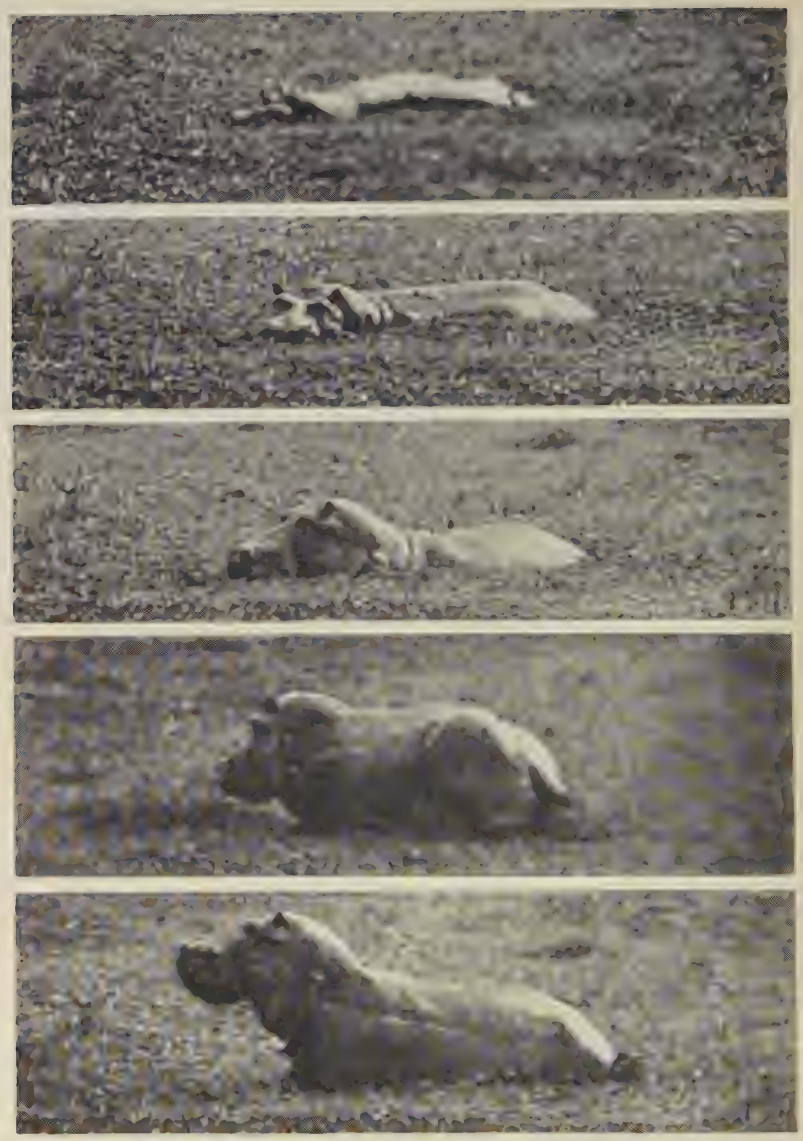
The family habits of the rhino are interesting. The youngster always stays with its mother until it is nearly fully grown; but the father, although he may come back at night, is inclined to keep out of the nursery while the rampageous infant is around; and it is not till the youngster is grown that ordinary family life is resumed!

And although the rhino is alert and suspicious by day he relaxes by night—so much so, indeed, that at water-holes I have found him to be positively frisky. You would not think that this word could possibly be applied to a big and cumbersome and at times very terrifying animal like the rhinoceros; but often I have seen two or three rhino at play near a water-hole, chasing each other round and round, and puffing and squealing all the time. It was quite

obvious that dangers—men, rifles, clicking cameras and all—were then quite forgotten, and that those entirely peaceful rhino had set out to enjoy themselves in the short hours of the night before wariness and suspicion again became necessary.

THE LUMBERING AND UNGAINLY HIPPOPOTAMUS

An amphibious monstrosity sometimes measuring fourteen feet from nose to tail, the hippopotamus generally drowses in the river by day and feeds along the banks by night.



AN INTERRUPTED SIESTA

An eccentric among his fellows, this hippo preferred warm ooze to water. These photos show how he looked when, at the approach of the photographer, he emerged lazily from his mud bath and waddled disgruntedly toward the river.

Chapter Five

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

CHAPTER V

The Hippopotamus

THE hippo is such an easy-going, lumbering creature, that you can only regard him with good-tempered amusement. Even when you see his huge teeth you cannot conceive of him as being dangerous, and you feel that the baring of those teeth cannot possibly be anything more exciting than the beginning of a lazy yawn.

The more you watch him, the more you are convinced of his utter harmlessness. He has always that air of contentment which we see in people who are excessively stout; and one can picture him among his own family as being sleepily humorous. On an island of rock in the middle of a Central African river or lake, you can see him basking in the sun at peace with all the world; or you may see a school of twenty or thirty, tussling, swimming, and plunging in turn from the island into the water, all with

the air of finding life a game in which one is not expected to be too strenuous; or you may see the fat mother hippo with her fat round baby, as she encourages it to climb on to her back and lie there while she floats.

Seeing these things, as I have so often done, I find it impossible to feel anything but affection for the hippo. Many a time he has stretched my patience to its limits because in certain circumstances he is not easy to photograph, and it is sometimes necessary to wait and watch for a week before getting a result. But patience is the animal photographer's chief attribute, and waiting is never tiresome when it provides an opportunity for the most interesting of all studies—that of animal life.

The difficulty of photographing the hippo is due to his power of scent. In my earliest days in Africa, because I saw his curious habit of apparently peering into the distance, I spent a great deal of time in building a hide and making it conform to the vegetation of the river bank. But I soon realized that this was entirely unnecessary, and that I could build a rough hide of anything that was nearest to hand, or

even in some cases wait in the open, without any notice being taken of me, provided that I was out of the wind.

On the other hand, if the photographer arrives at the bank of a river which he cannot cross and finds the wind blowing steadily from him to the hippo, there is nothing for him to do but to retire for a distance, sit down and light his pipe, and wait in the hope that the wind will change.

The hippo, placid as he is, shares with the elephant a dislike of being disturbed. It is most unlikely that he would attack unless the very waters of his home were disturbed and he saw danger threatening his cows and his young (indeed, I have never heard of a single instance of a hippo attacking a hunter), but he would at once go to ground—or, to be more accurate to water. Directly he detected any unusual scent in his neighborhood, he would dive beneath the surface, and all that would be seen of him and his family would be their heads as from time to time they popped up to peer towards the shore, blowing occasionally just like whales, before diving again.

Because of this, the hippo-photographer usually feels that he would do far better from a boat. But that is not always the case, for though a boat can easily be paddled out of the wind it can also be taken close to islands; and when the photographer's enthusiasm brings him too near, the hippo's good-nature is badly strained.

On one of my first visits to Central Africa I was walking one day along the edge of a papyrus bed when I noticed the track of hippo, leading to a sort of tunnel through the thickly-growing vegetation. Going down this for thirty yards, I came suddenly on a small lake in which, to my delight, I saw at least a dozen hippo. I could have taken my photographs then and there at seventy yards' range, but I knew of a boat on another lake not far away and I thought the chance of nearer photographs too good to be missed. Accordingly I went back to camp, and the next day eight porters carried a small, flat-bottomed boat to the edge of the pool.

With one native boy to paddle, I set out in this, paddling close to a little floating island of

papyrus[1] in order to choose the best angle from which to get my picture of the creatures that were peacefully basking against its edge.

I brought the boat closer and closer, without realizing the significance of the fact that one old bull was paying me a great deal of attention. He had been lying half in and half out of the water, with his little pig-like eyes almost on its level; and I have no doubt that to him we must have looked truly alarming, for he would have seen us chiefly as a great dark mass looming above him and appearing more and more threatening as we drew nearer and nearer. I doubt if he recognized us for a white man, a native and a boat: it is much more likely that he was merely frightened at something which might have been an invading hippo or might not, but was certainly too large and was coming too close for the safety of his family. In any case, he slid into the water, and came for us: and as he drew near he dived.

On the comparatively rare occasions when a

[1] The roots of this plant imbed themselves in earth that subsequently breaks from the shore and becomes a floating island.

hippo pays serious attention to a boat or a canoe, he has two methods of attack: he will either try to crush it in his huge jaws, literally almost biting off the prow, or he will dive so that he comes to the surface beneath it and overturns it. Either method, provided that the hippo is able to reach the boat, is almost certain to be successful.

In this case it was clear that unless our boat was turned very smartly indeed and paddled at top speed for the shore, the hippo would reach us and the native and I would go into the water. And although we were both strong swimmers, the pool was thick with reeds in which swimming would have been impossible. Besides, there were crocodiles.

So photography was forgotten and I grasped the second paddle. The boat shot round, and away we went for the shore, the hippo following. Once I thought to gain on him by steering so that the half-submerged end of an island came between us and him; but he cleared it at a leap, rising out of the water and jumping over a full yard of moss and weeds. And repeatedly he dived, leaving us in doubt, as we looked

round, as to how near he would be when he came to the surface, or whether he would even rise beneath us.

Certainly it was a near thing, for we had started fifty yards from the shore; and indeed I think it was only the shallowing of the water in the last twenty yards that saved us. There he could no longer dive, and swimming became more and more difficult, although our flat-bottomed boat could travel as fast as ever; and at last we sprang ashore, while the hippo turned slowly, grunted, and swam back to his family.

When one reaches safety after an adventure of that sort, one invariably speculates about what would have happened in the other event. Well, it wouldn't have been pleasant, but I do not think the actual unpleasantness would have come from the hippo. He would almost certainly have regarded his attack as finished when he had upset or smashed the boat. He could easily have killed us in the water with his teeth, but I do not think he would have bothered about it—perhaps because it was the boat rather than its occupants that had terrified him. No.

The unpleasantness would have come from the crocodiles.

I do not know what exactly are the relations between the hippo and these neighbors of his. On a small rock in the middle of a river you will often see half a dozen hippo, two or three water turtles, and a couple of crocodiles; and there will be no sign that the hippo have even the slightest fear. Yet the crocodile (as I shall relate elsewhere) certainly can kill a rhino, and I have seen him very rapidly devouring the body of a *dead* hippo, so that one would have thought that live hippo are not always safe when Mr. Crocodile feels hungry. And certainly I have often been struck with the scarcity of hippo babies. But it is a point on which it is very difficult to be certain.

The hippo's chief enemy, alas! is man. He is killed by the natives partly because he invades gardens and damages crops, and partly because they regard hippo meat—and particularly hippo foot—as a great delicacy. He is also killed by the white hunter—though for that I find it hard to give a reason, since the value of his skin (used for walking-sticks, etc.) and of

his teeth (once the foundation of many sets of artificial teeth) is not great; and he supplies no other commercial products.

Yet, although it must be poor fun indeed to shoot so harmless an animal, it is not infrequently done. A few years ago, for instance, a sportsman came to a beautiful pool which I know well, and opened fire. At his first shot the hippo dived, but a minute later one of them, with the curiosity which the animal invariably displays, popped his head out of the water—and received a bullet for his pains. He dived (or sank), and a minute later a head again appeared, to receive another shot. It is probable that the hunter imagined that he was but pouring lead into one tenacious hippo; but he did not know that the body of a dead hippo, if not recently fed, will stay under water for two or three hours, and he apparently did not realize that all the hippo in that pool were filled with the same curiosity and were all showing it in hippo fashion by popping up continually to see what was happening. And the result—the tragic result—of this effort at marksmanship was that a few hours afterwards the dead bodies

of no less than twelve hippo floated down the stream.

Some no doubt escaped; but the pool was then deserted, and although the incident occurred years ago no hippo have returned to it. As with the elephant and other creatures, news spreads and memories are long.

It is doubtless for the sake of protection that wherever possible the hippo prefers to rest on an island rather than on the shore, except in the more secluded places. Where he inhabits a pool or river that is free from rocks or islands, he is compelled to rest on the banks, but it is obvious that he finds this much less satisfactory than even the most knobbly rock where his enemies are less likely to reach him.

The hippo, as the adventure I have related above implies, is for his great size remarkably rapid in the water. He is amphibious, but the water is always his home, and not only can he swim strongly on the surface but he appears also to be able to travel under water.

Once I surprised one on a low bank of a narrow river where he appeared to be asleep. Instantly he half rolled and half dived off the

bank, very much alarmed and very anxious to put as much distance as possible between himself and me, and to keep under the cover of the water. He went straight to the bottom, and as the water was fairly clear I, from the top of the bank, could see him, not swimming, but actually running along the bed of the river, leaving a trail of mud behind him; and so fast did he go that, although I followed him as fast as the bushes along the bank would let me, he went out of my sight in seventy-five yards.

He is also surprisingly strong. One day I found a young hippo asleep on the banks of the Tana River. Thinking that I could study him in temporary captivity in my camp, I tried to secure him, just as, in the far-off days when I was a farmer in Yorkshire, I used to handle a pig. Holding a pig, if you know how to do it, isn't very difficult, but holding even a young hippopotamus is quite a different matter. I am a fairly powerful man, but I was certainly no match for that baby, and it was only by letting go at the critical moment that I saved myself from being dragged over a ten-foot drop down

into the river—where the crocodiles would have finished me.

Although the hippo spends most of his time in the water, he takes no interest in fish and is entirely a vegetarian. Even the damp weeds and reeds and moss around his home do not interest him, and consequently he has always to come ashore to feed, where—walking along and browsing as he goes—he looks clumsier than ever.

Although now, as I have said, the water is his home and he only uses the shore sometimes for sleep and always for food, I think that at one period he probably lived on land for the greater part of the day and only took refuge in the water at night. The evidence for this is that even to-day it is only in districts that have been settled and where he has been disturbed that he confines his visits ashore to the night: in the remote districts where he is more nearly in the conditions known to his ancestors he is often to be found on land in the daytime for long periods. In the same way, it is only in the secluded places that he will dare to give tongue by day, making noises which are indescrib-

able—a medley of sound which starts with a roar that could be mistaken for that of the lion.

When the dry season comes and the smaller pools and rivers begin to dry up, the hippo migrates to larger stretches of water, traveling for the most part at night but often compulsorily for great distances. At one much inhabited river many miles from other water, hippo, crocodiles and fish will all move as the water gets scarce, first to deeper water farther down stream and finally to a swamp into which the water passes. There they will remain till the dry season ends, apparently under the impression that the swamp is bound to provide them with water. But in the hottest days they find their mistake: the fish die and crocodiles and hippo are almost in extremities.

For the most part the hippo will spend his life on one particular piece of water, going from it perhaps in the dry season, but always returning to it when the rains come. He is not by nature an adventurer, and exploration for exploration's sake would not be likely to appeal to him.

And yet there are exceptions. I have occasionally found tracks of the hippo far from any water and quite out of the line, between one pool and the next, which would be used between the seasons. Such signs are unaccountable, unless there is here and there a more daring member of the race who treks from one haunt to another.

After all, the student of nature is constantly finding surprises. He may be quite convinced that a certain animal will do this and will never do that; and then he will find unquestionable evidence that in one instance at least what he imagined would never happen has occurred. Once, for example—and once only—have I found a hippo who apparently did not regard water as his favorite element. Trekking inland, I saw what I at first took to be a pool of water or possibly some gigantic piece of bone. But it was neither: it was the wet back of a hippo lying in a swamp or morass! Only half a mile away flowed a river, but this hippo—this eccentric among hippopotami—preferred a mud bath to one in water. To satisfy his taste he forsook the society of his fellows and ran the

risk of staying on shore in the daylight; and although he rose lazily at my approach and waddled river-wards, he seemed to be demanding, disgruntledly, why, because he had been born a hippo, need he do exactly the same things as every other hippo; and why could he not have his sleep in peace?

No doubt an unanswerable question—though that there could be cause for asking it, or even appearing to think it, seems more surprising than ever when one goes again, as I did last autumn, to a broad river, and sees the normal hippo, entirely happy in the water, yawning lazily, but absolutely content. There is one such spot which is the home of the largest school of hippo I have ever seen. It is fortunately little known, and I certainly shall not disclose its position lest the man with the rifle shall think there are hippo there to spare for him. It is there that I have done much of my study of the animal; and I, at any rate, could spend weeks beside that water, watching, till I too decided that there was nothing better in life than to float and swim and dive, and peer now and then at things that didn't matter, and yawn

and blow water-bubbles, and sink lazily below the surface, and then float again in the warmth of the sun.

Chapter Six

THE BUFFALO

CHAPTER VI

The Buffalo

WHILE such animals as the lion, the leopard, the elephant and the rhinoceros make an instant appeal to the stay-at-home imagination as creatures whom it would be unsafe to meet in the open, there is no such popular feeling, I believe, with regard to the buffalo: at any rate cinematograph pictures of them invariably meet with a chilling reception, the truth being, I suppose, that their appearance reminds people of harmless domestic cattle. Yet if you asked a number of men who knew the African wilds to name the most dangerous animals of the country, it is certain that the buffalo would appear on every list.

Just as I consider that the elephant has lost his natural mildness of temperament through being persecuted by man, so do I think that the buffalo by nature is not so much fierce as inquisitive. He is inclined to inspect at close

quarters anything which seems strange to him; but when he is shot at, his curiosity frequently gives place to a wild anger, so that he seeks revenge.

When a buffalo has been wounded he may do any one of a number of things. He may attack at once. Or he may gallop away into the bush—and then the inexperienced hunter follows him up. Suddenly the hunter may be startled to hear a bellow a few yards behind him, the buffalo having made a circle, picked up his scent and literally stalked him.

The hunter, in such a case as that, if he has not time to fire, will probably get very hastily into a tree, thanking his stars that there was one available. But later, if the buffalo is thoroughly roused by pain, the hunter will become less sure of his advantage, for the buffalo will roam at the foot of the tree for hours. The man will become tortured by thirst and exhaustion: or perhaps when night falls he will imagine that he can climb down and steal away. But no! When he reaches ground he finds the angry beast still waiting—and he is lucky indeed, then, if he can escape again.

That, of course, conjures up a horrible picture. But it is a true one. I have myself been chased by buffalo and only the speed of my horse saved my life: on foot I should not have had the slightest chance. During the war a herd took alarm at a company of my battalion marching through bush, charged, and injured several men very seriously. Last year I worked my way in daylight quite close to a herd on an open hill-side where I could find no cover except a few small bushes. For a time all went well; then one old bull put back his horns so that his nose pointed directly towards me, and began to advance. At that moment I was focusing my camera. When I looked up again he was still advancing, straight at me, and very much nearer. I didn't wait to take his portrait!

Certainly, the buffalo is far from being one of the safest animals for the unarmed man to photograph. Now that I have escaped from that adventure, I often wish that I had taken the risk of staying a minute or two longer so as to expose a few score feet of film on a charging buffalo. But then I console myself with the reflection that though I might have secured the

picture, it is very improbable that I should have lived to develop it!

Once I came to a papyrus swamp, quite close to civilization, where a herd of buffalo had lived for years. Being very anxious to photograph them, I built a platform on four long upright poles near the edge of the swamp, and there—fortified only with dried food, biscuits and cold tea—I kept watch for three days and nights. But I did not get a photograph. All day the buffalo lingered among the tall papyrus, the fluttering ibis disclosing to me their hidden position: at night they came out into the open to feed, often within a few yards of my camera—but always they returned to shelter before the light came.

At other times I was more fortunate in getting my pictures, but nevertheless I have certainly had many disappointments with regard to this animal. I once lost, by sheer bad luck, what should have been an ideal opportunity. I was camped close to land where I knew a big herd frequently grazed and had planned to stalk them the next morning. Meanwhile a young friend of mine who was entirely new to

THE MOST DANGEROUS BRUTE IN AFRICA

Despite its harmless appearance the buffalo is the most dangerous of creatures. Less powerful than the elephant and rhino, less swift than the lion, it is nevertheless more relentless in its attacks than any other wild animal.

THE HEAD OF THE CROCODILE

The huge jaws of the crocodile close upon its victim with the deadly precision of a steel trap. Even the rhino weighing two tons is said to be no match for these powerful creatures.

the country went out alone. He knew that a settler had taken land only a couple of miles away, and when he saw what he took to be a number of this settler's cattle out grazing, he stood watching them from a distance of just a hundred yards and admiring the particularly fine breed! Suddenly a native came on the scene, saw the buffalo and the man inspecting each other, and quickly put my friend wise to the real state of things, shouting to him to take refuge on a big clump of rocks. There, realizing at last his narrow escape, the novice was afraid to come down; so he fired a shot and sent the buffalo bolting for safety. Of course, they were nowhere to be seen next morning, and that chance had gone.

This was some years ago, before that area was so much overrun by civilization as it is now. To-day, no buffalo would be seen there by daylight, for, like many others, this creature will no longer feed by day except in secluded areas where he has not been molested.

Where buffalo have been much disturbed, they make a retreat on a hill-top or take refuge in dense forests. But those are not their natural

haunts, for above all things they want to live in the neighborhood of water. They are perfectly at home in swamps and can live contentedly in morasses of water and mud three feet deep. They are strong swimmers: indeed, though it may seem scarcely credible, it is a fact that seven or eight of them once appeared on an island on Lake Victoria, having actually swum four miles from the mainland.

It is no unusual thing for these animals, like the elephant and the rhinoceros, to trek for considerable distances at certain seasons. Needing water as they do, they are compelled to move in the dry season; but except in the most secluded areas they only travel at night. It is a sad thing, but they know that man is their enemy.

The lion is also an enemy, but except when a calf is stolen unnoticed from a herd, the buffalo can often defend themselves effectively. Disease is another enemy, and a serious one, for these animals suffer from the severe scourge of rinderpest—so much so, indeed, that whole herds have been stricken with it and almost wiped out. I have known of men being able to

walk up to them without the slightest opposition, only to find that the animals were too ill to resent the intrusion.

Chapter Seven

THE CROCODILE

CHAPTER VII

The Crocodile

I DO not like the crocodile. Glad as I should be to feel that there is in him, as there must surely be in all creatures, something that is pleasant if not actually charming, the fact remains that the only feeling aroused in me by the crocodile is one of loathing.

This has nothing to do with the fact that, as I shall shortly relate, only six months ago a crocodile snapped his jaws within six inches of my leg. It has not even very much to do with my knowledge that crocodiles devour young native girls who come to a river for water.

It is simply that the very sight of him makes me shudder.

Probably the feeling dates from a day, several years ago, when I saw a giant among crocodiles—the most fearsome and repulsive monster it has ever been my misfortune to meet. The ordinary crocodile is from twelve to fourteen

feet long. This giant was not an inch less than twenty-seven feet.

I was waiting with my camera near a sandbank on the Semeliki River. Several crocodiles of normal size waddled out of the river with the painful-looking and apparently exhausting gait which the creatures always use on land, and threw themselves down on the sand among some crane and plover. There they lay, opening their huge jaws so that I could see their teeth and look down their horrifying throats.

Suddenly the water of the river stirred, a scaly snout appeared, and then yard upon yard of body followed as the giant crocodile raised himself slowly on his legs till his body was two feet from the ground. He waddled about two yards away from the water and then flopped down on the sandbank, lying there, an abhorrent creature of evil, until after some minutes he slowly turned, waddled once more to the river, and sank out of sight.

In spite of my knowledge of his strength, in spite of a glimpse of his teeth, in spite even of the probability that at that moment there lay in his stomach bangles and other ornaments once

THE CROCODILE'S POWERFUL TAIL

The tail of the crocodile is a murderous weapon of attack. With one swift blow the crocodile will knock a victim down and then drag it into the water.

In Quest of His Prey

A fearsome and repulsive monster, the crocodile is ordinarily from twelve to fourteen feet long. Almost all creatures, both on land and water, are its prey.

worn by men and women, it was not terror or even horror that filled me, so much as disgust. There was something of evil uncanniness in the way the great brute rose silently out of the water and then in equal silence returned to it.

Ungainly as he is on shore, the crocodile is surprisingly fast when swimming. And his strength is enormous. A few years ago three observers saw a rhino come down to a river to drink. No sooner had he put his mouth to the water than he was seized by a crocodile which began slowly but surely to drag him into the river. Imagine that struggle! The weight of a rhino is close upon two tons, and he is amongst the most powerful of wild creatures: yet even with the frantic strength born of terror he was no match for the crocodile, and in a very few minutes he was pulled under water.

The crocodile's strength, however, is less surprising when one discovers his great weight. I once accompanied a friend who had been commissioned to secure the skin of one of the creatures for a museum. At my companion's shot, the crocodile, which was lying on a rock thirty feet from the bank, gave a little jerk and

then lay still. Undoubtedly the beast was dead, but he might not have been alone, so the native porters got my friend to fire several shots into the water before they would venture across to slip a rope round the body. Then very nervously they waded into the river; but just as they reached the rock, one of them cried that the dead crocodile had moved, and there was a panic-stricken rush to safety. Finally they went again and put round the ropes, and we all began to haul. Then I discovered the peculiar smell given off by crocodile, and was amazed, first at the creature's heaviness, and afterwards at the weight of his skin alone. And there was another discovery then, too—or at least a partial one—for when we returned next day we found that nearly the whole of the skinned crocodile had disappeared in the night, though there was no sign to tell us what had done the scavenging. Probably many beasts had fed off it, and it would not be surprising if the lion had had his share.

The crocodile's weapons are the teeth of his two jaws, which close upon each other almost with the precision of a rat-trap, and his enor-

mously powerful tail. Often he will lie apparently asleep upon a bank until some unsuspecting creature comes near. Then, instantly, the tail will be lifted and swung round to knock the victim at one blow into the river, where as it struggles the crocodile will seize it and drag it under water. Or if the first attack is made too far from the bank (and I have seen crocodiles thirty yards from water) for the victim to fall into the river, it will be struck down, very likely with broken limbs, and then seized and dragged into the water.

Neither animal nor man when caught by the crocodile has the slightest chance of escape, and all is over in a few seconds. A man may foolishly be cooling his fingers over the side of a boat, a dog may be swimming, or an animal may be drinking—then a scream, a yelp, or a cry—a splash—a swift swirl of water—and finally silence while the crocodile drags his victim to the bottom or under some bank, there to eat him at leisure.

No sensible traveler would cross a river of any size in Central Africa except by boat or canoe, for the crocodile inhabits most of these

rivers, often in great numbers; and it is frequently impossible to tell whether he is present at a particular spot or not. The fact that he cannot be seen is no proof of his absence, for he can remain under water for long periods.

A friend of mine with two companions once found a deep and beautiful pool at the foot of a fall where in the wet season a river pours over rocks fifty feet high. Very rashly the three men decided that such a place called for a Sunday morning bath, and they took advantage of a jutting rock ten feet high for some fancy diving. After a while they decided that the dog of one of them ought to be sharing in the fun, and pushed it into the water. It swam two yards—then gave a sudden yelp and disappeared.

Nothing but a crocodile could have been the cause of that disappearance, for no body floated later to the surface.

Apart from their habit of keeping under water, crocodiles are not very easily distinguished. Lying mostly in the water with just a few inches of head showing, they look exactly like floating logs, and many an animal—and even many a man—has been deceived with fatal

results. And although the crocodile may look almost yellow immediately on emerging from the water, as he dries in the heat of the sun his color changes to a gray that is almost exactly the shade of the mud or rocks on which he lies.

It is curious that crocodiles do not seem to like a cool breeze when out of the water, and are therefore most likely to go on shore between eleven and two o'clock, when the wind has died down and the sun beats on the unshaded land.

It is said that when on shore they lie with their jaws open as an invitation to the birds to pick insects from their mouths. I cannot be sure of this: scores of times I have seen crocodiles with birds around them, but though they repeatedly came near the crocodiles' mouths I did not witness the operation.

The crocodile has good eyesight and exceptional powers of hearing. Also he can feel vibrations under water for extraordinary distances: quite recently I tested this by having a board smacked flat on the water—and a crocodile below the surface *over a mile away* gave

signs immediately that he had been disturbed by the vibration.

All creatures, both on land and in water, are the crocodile's prey. As I have said in an earlier chapter, although he is seen sleeping at peace on the same rock as a family of hippos, he appears to include hippo babies in his diet. He has enemies, of course, of whom man, who shoots him, and the monitor, an amphibious creature with somewhat the appearance of a monster lizard, which digs up and eats the crocodile's eggs, give him the most trouble.

It has been suggested that it is only in old age that he takes to eating man with any regularity; but when any full-grown crocodile is cut open it is no unusual thing to find within him a collection of native ornaments which is certainly not the result of the killing and eating of a single person.

At any rate, no man should rely upon stories that crocodiles, or a particular crocodile, will not eat men. Nor should he run risks with any crocodile. I have learnt that for myself in an adventure which very, very nearly taught me finally the danger of rashness. Last summer I was

taking cinematograph pictures of one of these creatures, when I went to a position which was only safe providing that the crocodile either did not turn or gave me warning of his intention to turn. There for one moment I half turned my back, only watching the crocodile out of the corner of my eye while I signed to one of my boys. Suddenly I saw a movement, and as I instantly sprang back I heard a crack behind me, and, turning round, I saw the crocodile with his mouth, just closed, six inches from my leg. But for my noticing the preliminary turning the teeth would have closed on my flesh, and I should very quickly have been dragged into the water and drowned—to be subsequently eaten.

Thinking these things as I moved hurriedly backward, I looked at the horrible, scaly, unpleasant body of the crocodile—and once again I shuddered.

No. There is no charm for me about the crocodile. I have no virtues in him to report. I cannot even describe scenes of domestic felicity in his private life: for when Mrs. Crocodile lays her eggs she only buries them in the sand to be incubated by the sun.

Chapter Eight

THE GIRAFFE

CHAPTER VIII

The Giraffe

THE giraffe, to those who do not know him, is rather a subject for merriment. We recall childhood jokes about sore throats, and comic pictures of Noah's Ark with the giraffe's head protruding through a skylight; and his shape, "all legs and neck," and totally unlike that of any other living creature, makes us sympathize with the child at the Zoo who pointed and said: "Mummie, is that real?"

But when we know him better, when we see him at close quarters in his own home, in spite of the ungainliness of his gait and the acrobatic contortions which he has to perform in order to drink, we discover that he is graceful, that his skin is like a beautiful and patterned velvet, and that the adjective which best fits him is "stately."

It is a curious fact that when you see a giraffe from afar you think that while he has a very

long neck and very long, thin legs, he has hardly any body; and yet when you come to within ten yards of him you are surprised to find how large his body really is and that he no longer seems ill-proportioned. Once—and curiously enough once only—I discovered the body of a dead giraffe, and then more than ever I was struck with the size of the body. It is not very easy to account for this optical effect, but I imagine that because of its chestnut coloring with dark lines, the body appears to increase in size in proportion to its nearness to a background: from a long distance you will see the giraffe against distant landscape, and the chestnut merges into the background while the lines are too thin to indicate an outline; when you see the animal contrasted with the grass only a few yards behind it, it appears much bigger, because the difference between the chestnut and the brownish-green is apparent and the lines are clear; and when you see a dead giraffe on the ground the closeness of the background gives still more emphasis to the coloring.

But apart from that effect, I do not think that the imitative qualities of the giraffe's skin

are very great, except when he is amongst thorn trees—and then he can be almost indistinguishable. Against the grass you can see his markings even when you can hardly distinguish the chestnut, and he seems to stand out almost in relief; but against a tree you cannot possibly tell which are his markings and which are the branches.

If he is standing behind a thorn tree, with his head and neck projecting over it, you will very likely be quite unaware of his presence. Often I have set out to stalk, as I thought, a single giraffe standing near a tree, and then as I drew closer three or four others have appeared, apparently out of nowhere, although all the time they must have been standing against the background of the tree and well within my sight.

There are four ways by which you can approach giraffe. You can come boldly on foot over the open country, and, provided you approach at an angle, so that it appears that you will pass them, the giraffe will allow you to come as close as a hundred and fifty yards without undue alarm, but then will suddenly bolt

for thirty yards, turn and look back, and then go on. You can try to pursue them on horseback, and if your horse is good and the country quite open you may just be able to overtake them; but that is of little use to the photographer, for they will be hundreds of yards away again by the time he has dismounted. You can stalk them, noting their position and then making a wide detour through cover and finally crawling closer and closer, and by this means, if you are a skillful stalker, you may be able to come within thirty yards; but directly you show yourself the giraffe will loup away, with their long tails twisted up over their bodies, presumably to prevent a pursuer from having anything to grasp. And, lastly, you may approach them in a motor-car, and that is by far the most successful method, because, strange as it may sound, the giraffe—and for that matter the lion and other animals also—do not fear a man in a car as they fear a man on horseback or on foot.

This is one of the strangest facts now seen in Central Africa. Animals that can hardly even be stalked on foot can quite easily be approached in

a car driven quite openly towards them! One is compelled to assume that they appreciate an approach only in motions of the legs, and that they hardly realize that a box-like object which grows bigger and bigger is therefore coming nearer. In any case, it is unquestionable that the giraffe who bolts at the sight of a walking man a hundred and fifty yards away will remain perfectly calm while a car is slowly driven within twenty-five yards of him. And as long as the observer in his car refrains from undue movement he can remain and watch without scaring the animals into flight.

Similarly, if a giraffe is standing near a track along which a car passes, he will make no attempt to run away but will stand perfectly still, staring, presumably in amazement; and if the car goes on its way without stopping he will let it pass him and go right out of sight before he moves.

Once I drove after a herd of giraffe which led me across the plain and at last stopped to feed off a clump of thorn trees. My pursuit was perfectly obvious, but the giraffe merely moved while they wanted to move and halted

when they wanted to feed; and they showed no alarm even when I stopped the car within thirty yards of them. They fed quietly, and after a while moved on again. While watching, I had counted them, and now I realized that they were one short of their full number. By the tree at which they had been feeding, therefore, one must have remained; but try as I would I could not see him. If he had moved I should, of course, have discovered him at once, but for five minutes he kept absolutely still, standing just behind the tree and watching me over the top of it. Then at last I saw what I looked for: a movement—not it is true of the giraffe, but of tick birds which were running round his ears, under his lips and up the side of his face, in a manner which I should have thought would have produced an almost intolerable tickling!

Now, except for his curious trustfulness in the matter of the motor-car, the giraffe is a particularly wary animal, and, as I had been leaning this way and that from my seat in the car in an effort to discover him, he must have been aware of my presence. And yet he had

A Study in Movement

The movements of the giraffe are fascinating to watch. Despite its thin legs and disproportionately long neck, the creature has a stately and dignified bearing.

THE WARY GIRAFFE

A timid and apprehensive animal, the giraffe is always on the look-out for danger. It lacks claws and teeth with which to fight and its only defense weapons are its legs with which it can kick powerfully.

A Stately Aristocrat of the Herd

The skin of the giraffe is like beautifully patterned velvet which varies in color and design. It is this coloration which merges with the surrounding foliage and serves as camouflaging.

ROAMING IN PEACE

The giraffe is the most peaceful and harmless of animals, living on good terms with all its neighbors except the lion. Giraffes are strongly gregarious and seldom stray far from the herd.

stayed perfectly still, watching me, without making any attempt to bolt.

It wasn't what one might have expected; but I think the reason was that he had perfect faith in his invisibility—and indeed trusted to that far more than to his speed. If he had realized that the tick birds had given him away he would have changed his tactics and bolted, but as he continued to keep perfectly still—even in spite of the tickling—he must have thought himself hidden.

The giraffe is not very well furnished in the matter of defensive weapons—or at any rate he knows that he can only afford to use them as a last resort. Only when he is cornered, or when the presence of youngsters prevents his running away, will he resort to violence. A friend of mine once watched a mother giraffe defending her baby from a lioness. She had put the youngster into the only position of safety—immediately beneath her body; and she turned to face the lioness, which circled round her in search of an opportunity to spring from behind and out of reach of the giraffe's forefoot—for it is the forefoot rather than the hindfoot which

is the giraffe's weapon, and its kick is deadly, even to a lion. Whether the hunting skill of the lioness would have prevailed or whether the giraffe would have been able to profit by an incautious moment to get in her kick, I do not know, for the arrival of my friend on the scene quickly sent the lioness to the right-about.

The famous hunter, F. C. Selous, told me of a similar incident; but in that case the end was tragic, for the mother, in her frantic excitement, kicked, not the lion, but her own offspring and broke the little creature's back.

The mother giraffe is always very anxious for her young ones, and it is pretty to see the care with which she guards them. Recently, while I was watching a herd, the calves strayed away for some distance; but suddenly a mother looked round from her feeding and quickly made her way to them, collecting them into a bunch and driving them before her back to the herd. But on one occasion in my experience, when a herd took sudden alarm and bolted from a party of observers who had come up in a car, a youngster fled away from the rest, turned panic-stricken

straight towards the car—and would not leave it!

The herd instinct must be very strong, for a single giraffe is much more wary than the members of a herd, while one that—as has sometimes happened—is pursued on horseback and captured may die, not from exhaustion, but from sheer fright.

One of the peculiarities of the giraffe is that it is entirely silent, never uttering a sound even in moments of terror; and yet the animals in a herd seem to have some method of conveying ideas to one another, for they will all move in one direction at the same moment. They do not exactly follow a leader as sheep do, but move like a battalion of soldiers turning at a word of command.

I have seen herds of as many as thirty animals, and I have been struck by the fact that they vary somewhat both in color and in the design of their lines. Once, in a herd of normal coloring, I noticed one, in perfect condition, who was nearly black, and I have seen others that were almost gray. They vary, too, in temperament, some herds being very trusting and

others really wild. They are found mostly in open country, but also in the hill districts; and herds that live in the open will sometimes wander into the hills—presumably in search of water, which they generally find at the foot of a hill.

A man once told me that he was certain that the giraffe never drank at all. Of course, that is not the case, but it is true, nevertheless, that they often go without water for considerable periods. I once watched a herd for three days, and certainly, unless they found water at night, which is not their normal drinking time, they did not drink during that period. In the dry season water may be scarce, so that it might take them two days to reach it, and it is clear that abstinence for so long would not trouble them unduly.

On the other hand, when a giraffe does drink he does it thoroughly. It is not an easy matter for him. His anatomy is adapted, not for eating grass off the ground, but for eating the topmost leaves of thorn trees, and to get his head down to water requires a real effort. He has first to spread his front legs far apart, because his legs are longer than his neck, and at the same

time to bend his knees. It is an awkward position, and he has to get to it carefully, making sure first that he is in exactly the right place for bringing his mouth to the water. Then he drinks, very daintily but thoroughly, and afterwards proceeds to straighten himself out very much like a contortionist at the end of a complicated performance. And very likely, as soon as he is in an upright position, he will decide that his thirst is not quite slaked, and down he will go again, straddling his legs and bending his knees as before.

Once while I was watching at a water-hole I saw a herd of thirteen giraffe approaching from a ridge. The wind was in my favor, and yet so wary were the animals that they took over an hour to cover a hundred and fifty yards from the ridge to the pool. But at last they came, and I was rewarded for my patience by the wonderful sight of zebra and oryx and the thirteen giraffe all drinking together at the same water-hole within fifteen yards of me.

The giraffe is a peaceful and harmless animal, hunted sometimes, it is true, by the lion, but living otherwise on good terms with his

neighbors. In some districts he is killed by the poisoned arrows of natives, and sometimes he is shot by sportsmen. But in spite of this there is good evidence, I am glad to say, that his numbers in Central Africa are increasing, so that, whatever may be the unfortunate fate of such animals as the rhino, the giraffe at any rate is likely to be left to adorn the African bush.

Chapter Nine

APES AND MONKEYS

CHAPTER IX

Apes and Monkeys

I

LIVING as he does in the thickest of tropical forests and on far-distant mountains, the Gorilla is not easily studied by the naturalist, and comparatively little is known of his habits. Many a dead gorilla has been examined and measured (and subsequently stuffed), and it is known that he stands nearly six feet high, has a chest measurement of over sixty inches and a span from outstretched hand to hand of over seven and a half feet. Much, too, is known of his conduct when attacked. But his life when he is undisturbed, when he is living at peace with his family, has not nearly so often been observed. For my own part, in all the years I have spent in Africa, though I have covered hundreds of miles in search of him, I have never yet had the luck to be able to photograph

him or to study him thoroughly at close quarters.

On the other hand, he has acquired, probably on account of his huge size, his strength, his ferocious expression and his rage when attacked, an entirely unjustified reputation for fierceness which has led to his being sought by adventure-loving hunters. For some time his extermination made rapid progress, and even seven years ago it was estimated that only about eighty gorillas were left in the mountainous district which is his special haunt in Central Africa. Now he is protected, and it is a crime to shoot him without a special permit. Permits, however, are granted to scientific expeditions sent out by museums—not for indiscriminate shooting, but for the shooting of a stated number—and apart from that the law, of course, is not always obeyed. So, although the process of extermination is now much slower than was the case a few years ago, it nevertheless continues.

It is the fact that the gorilla is a very harmless and peaceable animal. Admittedly, he doesn't look it. An early explorer described him as "a being of that hideous order, half beast,

half man, which we find pictured by old artists in representations of the infernal regions." But, nevertheless, there is not a single recorded instance of a gorilla attacking a man when attack has not been provoked. Though he is strong enough to strangle a lion, he lives on parsley and the wild carrot. All the stories of a beast that beats his breast and roars are of a harmless creature only roused to fury in defense of his home. The only natural use for the gorilla's strength is the breaking down of branches with which to build a nest where his mate may rear her young.

2

The Chimpanzee, in his wild state, is almost as difficult to photograph as the gorilla, for he does not live on the ground. The big forests are his home, and there he builds his nest in a tree-top far out of the reach of danger. Now and then a party will come down to raid the native plantations, but for the most part the observer will hear chimpanzees but will not be able to see them. To attempt to pursue them by tree climbing would be hopeless, for no man has the

agility of a chimpanzee, and the creatures would have swung from bough to bough, passing from one tree to another, long before the camera could be brought into action.

Once I thought that after long searching my chance for a picture had come, for I discovered a family of chimpanzees in the lower branches of a big forest tree. But, alas! there was not an atom of sunlight, for the chimpanzee cannot stand the heat of the sun in Africa; and although I waited without the slightest movement they did not come into a better light.

If you stand in the shady forest in the early morning, you will hear the chimpanzees uttering their weird sounds far above your head. But just before noon all will grow quiet, for that is the hour when in the greatest heat of the day the chimpanzee, like all forest dwellers, takes his rest, either in a nest or on a sheltered branch. It is in the cool of the evening that he will bestir himself, swinging from branch to branch, playing games with his brothers, and seeking the wild fruits of the trees.

Stanley relates that Emin Pasha told him he once heard strange sounds from the tree-tops,

and on investigation found that they came from chimpanzees who had stolen a drum from a native village and were trying to do what they had seen the natives do. I can well believe that, for nothing pleases the chimpanzee more than something with which he can make a noise. I have often seen—and heard—one of my chimpanzees in England improvising on such an instrument as an empty petrol can.

But if you want to study the chimpanzee, it is not in the African forests that you will do it. You will do as I have several times done, and adopt a young one—a baby, perhaps, that has been found deserted on the ground after its mother has been killed by the poisoned arrows of the natives—and take it to your camp or even bring it home to England. Then you will see that the chimpanzee is the most intelligent by far of all the animals. You will see his marvelous powers of imitation, his friendliness, his wonderful capacity for play. His capabilities will be those of the wild chimpanzee, and from them you can draw conclusions of the life that his family lives in Africa. You will see his agility, his strength, his inquisitiveness, his nearness

to a much stronger degree of understanding; and then you will realize how fascinating would be the study if only it were possible to watch him unobserved in his own home.

3

Although in Central Africa there are almost insurmountable difficulties in studying the gorilla and the chimpanzee, there is no difficulty at all with regard to the Baboon. Wherever you go you can see him, in open country as well as among the hills and forests. Often you will discover a lump of rock as large as a house projecting from a hill-side, and there you will see baboons at play—twenty or thirty of them, or possibly as many as a hundred. Or you will meet a troop in the open, walking with a leader in front, the other males, the mothers and their babies behind, and one big old fellow to guard the rear; and they will not be unduly afraid of you, merely walking quietly away for a little distance while the "rear guard" climbs a tree to make sure that you are not following too closely.

If you stay to watch a troop of baboons on a rock, you are certain to be reminded of scenes at the sea-side, with a group of mothers sitting together on a breakwater while their children play below; and the similarity is so striking that you are bound to laugh at the thought. You will see half a dozen mother baboons sitting apparently deep in conversation amongst themselves, but with careful eyes from time to time on their youngsters; and you will see the little fellows playing a sort of "I'm the King of the Castle" on an out-jutting rock, taking it more or less in turns to be pushed over the edge of the rock and then to scramble back. Now and again you will hear one of the youngsters give a little whimpering cry as the play becomes too rough, and immediately its mother will pick it up, cuddle it and soothe it, and then put it down while once more she turns to gossip with her friends.

How often we have seen the same sort of thing at Margate or at Brighton!

The old leader of a troop appears to fulfill most of the duties of a tribal chief. He is the general in war and the judge in peace. If there

is a suspicion of danger, it is he who will investigate it. And it seems that all sorts of problems are brought to him by members of the troop.

One day I watched at a water-hole, dug by animals in a dried-up river-bed, when a big troop came to drink. When they were seventy yards from the pool they halted and the old leader came forward, right down to the water, to make sure that all was safe. I was secreted behind a hide-up which I had carefully built of stone, so he did not suspect my presence, and in a minute he gave a short bark which the baboon always uses to signify "All Clear!" Then the whole troop came down.

After they had drunk they did not at once move off, but played among the rocks and sand of the river-bed or sat, apparently talking.

Undoubtedly there is a baboon language, though I do not think it has a very large vocabulary. You can often see their lips moving as if in question and answer, and sometimes they seem in this way to carry on quite long conversations. On this occasion, one mother came with her baby perched like a little jockey on

A Family Conference

There are many varieties of the monkey tribe in Central Africa. They are not easy to study, however, for they live in the big forests and quickly take alarm at man's approach.

THE BLACK COLOBUS

The black colobus spends most of his time in the tree tops swinging easily from branch to branch. He is a queer creature with bushy white whiskers and a magnificent bushy tail.

her back to where the old chief was sitting on a stone, elbows on knees, exactly like a human being. The mother very gently lifted the baby from her back and laid it on the ground almost at the old fellow's feet, before she stooped to drink. While she was drinking the old baboon —becoming, apparently, suddenly interested in his task as nursemaid—picked up the baby, examined it, looked into its face and held it till the mother had finished. The mother, taking it from him, said something which I hope was a word of thanks, and then, with the child in her arms, sat down beside him, chatting brightly and telling him, I suppose, all about how her child cried in the night and the difficulties she had with it.

Suddenly one of the baboons at the waterhole, hearing I suppose the noise of my camera, gave the alarm with a sharp, shrill bark. Instantly the whole troop, headed by the old leader, made a dash down the dried-up riverbed—all of those fifty baboons, except one badly-scared youngster who ran madly to one side, just like a frightened child, and at last took refuge in a thorn tree only a few yards

from my hide-up. The others went down the river-bed, but very soon he was missed: I could see one of the mothers stopping to look to right and to left, and at last she came back to search.

The news that a youngster was lost was passed to the old leader, and he came back with the mother, now no longer the family friend with whom the children could be left, but very much the protector of a tribe who knew that danger was around. Clearly, he had not come back to help the mother find her child, so much as to discover the disturber of peaceful scenes and possible abductor of wandering babes. The mother very quickly saw where her youngster was hiding, stood beneath the tree and held out her arms, so that the little one dropped into them and was carried away to safety. But the old chief stood glaring around as if challenging anybody or anything to "come on if they dared." For my part, I frankly admit that I did not dare. That baboon would have topped the scale at one hundred and fifty pounds, and was strong enough to tear a dog to pieces in a minute—or to do me a considerable amount of damage. And as he was but ten yards

away I took particular care to make no sound.

Often the leader of a troop of baboons will have to exercise his skill and tact as a peacemaker. A troop consists of several families, and naturally in such circumstances there are rivalries and a good deal of quarreling. Young fellows or females or both together will have an argument, all chattering very fast and very loudly at the same time, until a blow is struck and a fight seems unavoidable. Then the old leader will come quickly down from a high part of the rock, step between the combatants, and put a stop to all that nonsense! The quarrelsome baboons will bolt to a safer place, but very soon the quarrel will be forgotten and all will play together, while the aged peacemaker will return to his rock and sit down, presumably to weigh the pros and cons of the case and assure himself that his judgment has been the right one.

An old baboon squatting on his haunches with elbows on knees looks in the distance exactly like a native; and indeed on more than one occasion hunters have shot natives when they thought they were shooting baboons. Dur-

ing the war, in German East Africa, the alarm was often given by soldiers unused to African conditions when nothing more dangerous was advancing than a large troop of baboons—a mistake which I can well understand, for although I have watched baboons for hours on end and can claim a considerable knowledge of them, I myself have before now been deceived. I well remember my amazement when, after I had spent some minutes watching with interest what I took to be a baboon sitting on a rock, a native quietly stood up and walked away!

Baboons seem to be on very friendly relations with most other wild animals. I have seen them joined by wart-hog, impalla, jackal and vulture at a water-hole, and I have seen them marching along with oryx and zebra. On the other hand, they have enemies who would make short work of them: and, in particular, they live in mortal dread of the leopard.

Once, in camp, I was awakened in the early hours of the morning by a terrific noise of excited chattering as a troop of baboons passed by: and in the midst of it I heard, farther off, the terrifying grunt of a leopard. Whether the ba-

boons were merely fleeing from the evil sound, or whether one of their number had been caught and they were leaving the scene of the tragedy, I did not know—and I certainly did not go to investigate, for, as I shall show in a later chapter, I respect the leopard, and I should have hesitated to approach him even if it had been daylight.

At another time I saw several baboons hurrying among bush and grass and rocks at the foot of a rocky hill-side, and I was struck by the way they moved, which clearly showed there was danger, although I could see nothing to cause it. But the explanation was at hand, for thirty seconds later a leopard crept past. He had—fortunately—no interest in me, though I was but thirty yards away: all his eyes and all his appetite were for the baboons.

Another enemy of baboons is the crocodile. When baboons go to a river, even though the water be shallow, they will be very suspicious and very much on the look-out for scaly danger before they venture to drink or before the mothers bathe their very young babies, as they are said to do although I myself have never seen

it. And even while they are at the water there will always be one baboon posted on look-out.

The baboon sentry is a very important member of the troop. However exciting may be the games played beneath him, or however good the hunting for food, the sentry will never leave his post—well, hardly ever. I have to make that qualification, for I did once see a baboon, whom I took to be a sentry, in very suspicious circumstances.

During my most recent expedition I was standing with a companion on a rough track which was bordered on one side for two hundred yards by long grass, with one solitary tree. Suddenly my companion saw a movement in the grass and, gripping my arm, said: "Lion!" As we were just on the borders of the lion country I had no reason to doubt him; but, nevertheless, he was wrong. Suddenly from the waving grass jumped a baboon, straight into the air, in an effort to reach a branch of the tree. There was fruit on the tree, and again and again he sprang, evidently thinking of nothing in the world but the chance of fruit.

Knowing the baboon as I do, that seemed to

me very odd; for, as I have said, the baboons live in troops, and never have I seen or heard of one baboon wandering by himself. But a few weeks later I camped on the same spot, and then I discovered that it was the home of a large troop, to which the solitary baboon that I had seen must almost certainly have belonged. Of course, it is conceivable that he was but a truant —but I cannot help suspecting that he was a sentry who had forgotten his job!

Baboons are not migratory animals. They keep to one patch of country and usually adopt one piece of rocky hill as their home where they sleep at night, only leaving it in the daytime for long walks in search of food. They go leisurely then, but their search is diligent, for though they are interested in fruits, they examine everything that attracts them, often peering carefully under stones for scorpions and insects. It is interesting to see this search, for their eyesight is wonderful and very little escape their attention.

They are always attracted by anything unusual. I remember once sitting outside my tent near some big rocks while I played with my

chimpanzee, Toto. Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a movement about twenty yards away, and there, on the rocks, a big baboon sat watching me with the utmost interest. What he saw evidently excited him immensely, and he seemed very much puzzled at what his little cousin was doing with a man. It would have been interesting to have let the two creatures meet; but it would have been dangerous, for Toto's conduct in my camp would not have had the old baboon's approval, and a chimpanzee is no match for a baboon.

The stories which I have told in the last few pages should have shown that it is when on the march (as at the water-hole) that the baboon is most watchful and wary. When you approach a troop on a rocky hill they will show very little fear, and will merely climb to safety, and sit there watching you, secure in the knowledge that you cannot pursue them. Where they have not been molested they are not scared, and are indeed often remarkably interested in any human being that comes near them. Even when disturbed, they are not routed: they merely stroll away to safety. But if in the open one of

them was captured, I think that the whole troop would come to the rescue, fighting with hands and teeth.

The life of baboons is somewhat precarious. The leopard takes his toll, young ones are very often taken captive by the natives, and I am sorry to say that the baboon is often shot by sportsmen. But there is nothing to be gained by killing these amusing creatures; and it is far more worth while to study them, for they provide an entertainment which is invariably amusing. I know of few sights more humorous than the chattering family at play, and few more interesting than the long procession of a large troop filing down to cross a donga—an old man ahead, then fathers and mothers and youngsters and children and babies, with the watchful chief taking a last look round before bringing up the rear.

4

There are many varieties of the monkey tribe in Central Africa, the commonest being the

little gray fellows who play round the foot of trees on the banks of a river or near the lakes. They are very amusing to watch. Native boys often catch them with basket traps, and many times when they have been brought into camp I have tamed them in two or three days while waiting for a chance to take them home and set them free.

The more interesting varieties, however, are not easy to study, since they live in the big forests and quickly take alarm at man's approach. The Black Colobus, for instance, will jump from branch to branch and from tree to tree, but rarely if ever will he be seen on the ground. The only way to observe him is to sit very quietly under a tree and look up—and even then the task is a hard one, for although there is a considerable amount of white on his body and tail, he often lives among trees which are covered with lichen, when the white is not easily distinguishable.

Besides the black colobus, there is a Red member of the family, whose habits are quite different for he is definitely a ground animal. He has bushy side-whiskers which make his

facial expressions also quite different from those of the black colobus. Incidentally, he is very much the rarer of the two.

Chapter Ten

THE LEOPARD AND THE CHEETAH

CHAPTER X

The Leopard and the Cheetah

I

I HAVE implied in an earlier chapter that the pursuit of a Leopard through the African bush and forests is not an occupation which attracts me. Indeed, I regard him as one of the most dangerous creatures in Central Africa.

He is above all things a killer. Not only will he hunt for his dinner and attack his enemies, but at times he will kill for the mere lust of killing.

If I had to choose between facing a lion and facing a leopard, I should unhesitatingly choose the lion: for while of two hundred lions one might be a man-eater, there is a far larger proportion of leopards that are likely to kill a human being, and no one can say that a leopard will not kill on sight anything that attracts his

attention as a possible prey, whether it be dog, or pig, or guinea-fowl, or woman, or child.

The leopard is always on the war-path, always watchful, always ready to spring. He does not patrol, like the lion, in a troop, but goes by himself, silent footed, gliding through undergrowth almost with the sinister movement of a snake. You do not find him often in the open country; his domain is the forest, where undergrowth gives him cover and trees give him a hiding-place, and where he can pounce upon his prey before it knows of his presence.

He makes his home in a cave or small hole amongst rocks, and there he sleeps. There too he rears his cubs. But in the dusk and through the night—and for that matter also by day—he goes creeping along, alert for the baboon, the monkey, the smaller buck, or anything that may come his way. If he is near a settlement or a native village, he will very likely raid it and take a goat or a dog or a human baby.

The leopard is bold and cunning, and he will go long distances hunting for his prey. I know of one instance where a leopard (as his footprints showed) visited three estates night after

night, taking from each a dog, a turkey or a fowl, although to do so he had to cover twenty miles between the first estate and the last. Often he will go to the feeding-grounds of native sheep and goats, and he seems to know the hours, in the early morning, when a member of the flock is most likely to stray. He will wait in a forest glade (very likely lying, like one I saw last autumn, on an ant-hill) for unsuspecting animals to walk past. He will not fear to spring on to the verandas of houses, or even occasionally to enter the rooms: indeed he has been known to bound across a sleeping man in order to steal a dog. And when his appetite is whetted by a particular catch, he will come again and again for more. Often a settler's dog has disappeared as if by magic from a veranda, and in the subsequent nights every dog on every settlement for miles around has suffered the same fate.

He realizes, apparently, that women are less able to defend themselves than men, and children less likely still. Some years ago a leopard became interested in one native village. Evening after evening he went down to it, taking

what he could find. Terror reigned there and a large reward was offered for the beast's capture or killing. But still the nightly toll went on, and by the time the leopard was shot, no less than twenty-two children from that one village had been slain.

It was a friend of mine who eventually shot him. In the forest one evening without a rifle, my friend discovered that his pack of dogs had brought a leopard to bay. He hurried back a distance of three-quarters of a mile for the weapon, leaving behind him his twelve dogs to hold the leopard. When he returned, two of the dogs met him. He found the mangled bodies of the other ten where the leopard had last been seen.

That time the creature escaped, but not for long. My friend continued the pursuit, and eventually a bullet from his rifle saved the life of many a native child: for although of course there was no direct evidence that the leopard which he shot was the marauder, it is certain that at its death the raids on the village came to an end.

Much that I have said in this book should

have made clear my strong objection to the taking of animal life except for man's necessity for food. But to kill such an animal as this particular leopard is not wanton killing, and to it the objection cannot be applied. One's love for animals may be great, but it is not so great as one's love for the human child and one's duty to protect it, whether its skin be black or white. If I had discovered that murderous creature I should certainly have gone for a rifle.

But I did not find him. The most that I heard of him was a terrible grunting in the night—and of course I do not know that it came from this particular leopard, although when I heard later the story of the desolated native village close by I suspected that it did.

It was while I had with me my little fox-terrier, Simba. I was asleep with the dog beside me in a little tin-roofed wooden hut, when suddenly I was awakened by a thud overhead and heard that ominous grunting. Simba was terrified, and so for the matter of that was I. There was no doubt that a roaming leopard had picked up the dog's scent and was trying to force his way in. If he had succeeded—well,

it is most improbable that he would have stopped at the dog, and I had no weapon in the hut but a revolver, which is an entirely useless thing against a leopard. If I had gone outside to seek better protection the leopard would have sprung on to me from the roof directly I showed myself. There was therefore nothing to be done but to wait—and to trust that the roof would stand the strain longer than the leopard's interest. As things turned out, it did; but that is certainly not an experience that I wish to repeat.

A considerable part of the leopard's power of attack lies in his ability to climb trees and to jump. Sometimes he will spring against the bare trunk of a tree, grasp it with his claws and drag himself up to a branch: then he will lie on the branch, ready to leap down on some passing animal. When he has made a kill and eaten what he wants, instead of leaving the rest for scavenging jackals and vultures as the lion will do, he will hide it for less fortunate days. Grasping the remains of the carcass in his teeth he will spring into a tree and leave his kill in a fork between branches, taking infinite care

to hide it where no other animal will be likely to discover it: although in that he is not always successful, for once I proved that a lion had climbed the sloping trunk of a tree and come down again with a leopard's kill.

One evening whilst I was strolling down a river bank looking for pictures, I saw on the opposite side of the stream, close to the bank, three crocodiles feeding off the body of a dead hippopotamus that lay in the water. Suddenly, as I watched the scene, I saw another movement on the bank about ten feet above the water, and then very silently a leopard crept to the edge.

Apparently the appetizing smell of dead hippo, by then probably a trifle high, appealed to him, and he decided to take his share in the feast. Close to where he stood, a branch of a tree sloped down over the river and just above the hippo. Along this the leopard walked, lying down near the end of it, a flat, yellow streak against the darkness of the bank. Then he whisked his tail and began edging carefully forward till he was within two and a half feet of the carcass.

With three sets of claws firmly grasping the branch, he began to reach down with the fourth in a pawing movement with claws outstretched.

But still he could not reach. His claws came to within a foot of the meat, so that I expected at every moment that one or other of the crocodiles would snap at it; but the crocodiles were too busy tearing the hippo in pieces. For a time the leopard, making a peculiar noise in his eagerness, tried to reach farther down, but the attempt was hopeless and eventually he gave it up, lying on the branch for a while to watch in envy the more successful crocodiles. Then he crawled back to the bank, stood as if wondering whether he should take the risk of jumping down, and at last, as silently as he had come, crept back into the forest.

Because the leopard is very much a forest dweller, it is comparatively seldom that he is seen by men. Sleeping by day among rocks, as he does, and either prowling in undergrowth or lying on the branches of trees, hunters find him one of the most difficult animals to shoot: indeed it is usually found far easier to catch him in a baited trap. For the same reasons, he is dif-

ficult to study, and even more difficult to photograph, so that I do not know of many men who have secured his picture except in cases where he has been captured as a cub and reared to comparative tameness in captivity. Then, of course, the matter is easier, but even then, although in an enclosed space the leopard can be brought to bay before the camera, he is still exceedingly dangerous. I remember, for example, a man once offering to sell me a leopard which he regarded as tamed. Knowing what I do of the leopard's character, I hastened to assure him that the creature is never to be trusted; and in the middle of my lecture, the so-called "harmless" leopard suddenly sprang at its owner, and seized him by the arm between elbow and shoulder, while its hind legs tore his thigh and its teeth fastened in his shoulder.

It is generally at a man's throat that a leopard will spring. The leopard attacks with lightning speed, the man falls like a pole beneath the animal's weight, and then unless assistance is immediately at hand, there is little hope of escape. I do, it is true, know of one instance in which a man when attacked performed the al-

most incredible feat of grasping the throat of the leopard as they fell together with the beast underneath and, after a desperate struggle to keep the leopard's claws from reaching his stomach, actually choking it to death! But against that I could tell of many cases where a man was killed, and of many more where he was saved only in the nick of time. One friend of mine saved himself by throwing back his arm as he fell forward, so that it covered his neck behind him: and though, by the time his 'boys' drove the leopard off, his arm was terribly mauled, it was undoubtedly this that saved his life.

For my own part I have never yet come to more perilous quarters with a leopard than in the incident I have described. Frankly, I am shy of the animal because, apart from the danger of being killed, there is almost a certainty that a wound from his claws or his teeth will turn septic. And although no doubt I shall continue my efforts to study him and to secure his picture, I shall always go in pursuit of him with a prayer that at the least I shall see him before he sees me.

A Superb Leap

A streak of spotted yellow flying through the air with terrifying speed, this cheetah can scarcely be distinguished from a leopard. Unlike the leopard the cheetah is harmless and never attacks man.

A Cheetah Sits for His Portrait

While bearing a close resemblance to the more deadly leopard, the cheetah has no claws. His paws are soft and padded like those of the dog and his sharp teeth are his only weapons of attack.

2

In appearance, the Cheetah is so much like the leopard, particularly when crouching in grass or undergrowth, that mistakes are often made, the cheetah falling a victim to a bullet intended for his ferocious cousin. But it is in appearance that the resemblance begins and ends. The leopard, as I have said, is essentially dangerous and always a killer: the cheetah, on the other hand, is an entirely lovable and harmless animal, who never attacks man even when sorely wounded, and is indeed so peaceable that it is even possible to take his kill from him, without his doing anything more than protest.

Often, while wandering through short bush, I have suddenly seen a streak of spotted yellow bounding into the open a few yards ahead, and have pulled up short, ready if necessary to defend myself from what I imagined to be a leopard: and then I have seen the very slight differences and have known that I faced, not my enemy the leopard, but my friend the cheetah. And knowing that, I have stayed in admiration

to watch this beautiful animal, with his coat bright in the sunlight, bounding in magnificent leaps across my path.

Thinking of the leopard, one remembers his fierceness and particularly his terrible claws. But the cheetah has no claws, and only a softly-padded paw, like that of a dog. He hunts, of course, for his dinner, and therefore is not loved by the smaller animals. But to anything else he is in no sense dangerous, and one is bound to regard him as a rather playful and entirely good-humored animal.

His home is not in the forests, but on rocky hills close to open ground. He hunts by daylight, and often you will see him perched on a crag in the early morning, looking down into the valley—a beautiful silhouette. From a rocky escarpment he will sight a small gazelle, or a young antelope, or a guinea-fowl, and then he will rise and make off, down the rocks and into the plain.

Few animals are swifter for a short distance, and if he can get a fair start, unseen, he will very soon run down his quarry; but, like the lion, he lacks staying power and therefore will

probably not overtake his prey in a protracted chase. If, however, he is successful, he will strike the animal on its hindquarters with his soft paw so as to throw it out of its stride, and then leap for its throat.

Unfortunately, the cheetah's skill and speed in hunting will eventually be his undoing: for considerable numbers are now caught and exported to India where they are trained to round up game. For that reason his numbers will decrease in Central Africa, and it seems likely that he will one day become extinct—an eventuality which I, for one, should greatly deplore. In another book[1] I have told of the games I have played with a half-tame cheetah in a garden and of the very obvious affection which it bore for me. The cheetah in the wilds is not tame, but he is certainly not fierce, and no one who cares for animal life could possibly wish him harm.

[1] *My Animal Friendships.*

Chapter Eleven

SNAKES

CHAPTER X

Snakes

SNAKES are a particular enemy of the wild animal photographer. Anyone else will keep, almost subconsciously, a look-out for them; but the photographer is thinking of his pictures and his eyes are on his subjects. Many a time I have had the narrowest escapes, simply through failing to notice that a snake was within a few inches of me.

Once I stood with my hand on the branch of a tree, and it was not until I happened to notice a movement that I detected a Green Mamba (which is a deadly creature) on the very branch that I was holding.

Recently, too, I was photographing a big grass fire in Central Africa and thinking of nothing but getting myself and my camera into the best position for such a grand subject, when a mamba suddenly attacked me. Fortunately he hit a leg of the camera tripod instead of my

leg—otherwise I do not suppose that I should now be writing this book.

Knowing as I do the deadliness of snakes in many countries, I am constantly surprised at the very small number of fatalities from snake bite that occur in Central Africa, even among the bare-footed and bare-legged natives. Yet snakes are plentiful; and if one is driving a car it is by no means unusual to see them wriggling across the track, or even for the wheels to run over them. Curiously enough, however, it is almost impossible to kill a snake by running over him, whether he be large or small—indeed, some will wriggle away afterwards almost as quickly as if they had never been touched. At the same time, it must not be thought that I am recommending my readers to put that to the test, for snakes, even if they are unhurt, are not likely to be pleased at being run over—and sometimes they will retaliate. A lady of my acquaintance recently ran into the tail of a mamba, and immediately the snake lashed back, missing her by inches as she sat in the car, and giving her a serious fright which was not lessened when she realized that although she had

THE DEADLY PUFF-ADDER

The puff-adder gets its name from its curious habit of blowing itself out before striking. This reptile was photographed just after striking.

A Python Waiting to Attack

Stretched along the branches of a tree the python will watch for an opportunity to attack his prey. Pythons are sometimes twenty-five feet long and they possess tremendous strength.

seen the mamba rise she had not seen him drop again, so that until she had made a thorough search she was uncertain whether or not he was still either on or in the car, waiting to strike again!

Another friend of mine lay down to sleep one afternoon on a camp-bed in his tent, and awoke later to see a mamba lying coiled up on his chest, asleep. Some people in such a position would have been kept still by sheer terror and would have waited, almost mesmerized, to see what happened—probably with fatal results. My friend, however, was of a different caliber, and he leapt up with a shout, knocking the mamba to the other side of the tent, and then fled into the open air.

Anyone who knows the wilds will shudder at that story, for whatever one may feel about snakes in the open, they are certainly not wanted in one's tent.

The mamba is deadly poisonous and I think the most dangerous snake in Central Africa. The Puff-adder is also very poisonous, but he is more easily dealt with because, if it is not the breeding season, he often lies perfectly still

(apparently with faith in his harmonizing powers or perhaps under the impression that he has not been seen), and only strikes as a last resort. He gets his name from his curious way of blowing himself out before striking.

Much less often do you see the Python, a very large but comparatively harmless creature. Some people claim that he grows to a length of as much as thirty feet, but the longest I have ever seen was twenty-five feet.

I do not think that the wild animals as a rule fear snakes in general, for they are not likely to be bitten unless they actually tread on one. But it is a very different matter with the python.

A friend of mine once watched one of the most remarkable sights ever recorded—a fight between a python and a hyena on some bare ground outside a papyrus swamp. The observer stood within fifteen yards of the scene, but neither combatant had any interest in him. It was a duel to the death, both creatures struggling till they were exhausted and then drawing apart for a breather until they were ready to begin again. A python's strength is terrible, but he needs to get a purchase with his tail on

some staple object so as to exert all his power. Here there was no tree to which he could anchor himself, and consequently he was at a disadvantage. The python fought to get a hold for strangulation; but the hyena bites, and when once his teeth close they are not loosened till they have brought a portion of his enemy away with them. That was exactly what happened in this case, and at last the hyena slunk away, leaving the python dead on the bare ground.

I once saw a python stretched along the branch of a tree, watching animals that fed, unaware of his presence, below. For some minutes I watched without realizing that all the time the python was slowly moving towards the trunk of the tree, so quietly did he move; but at last he started down the trunk on the farther side from the animals. Till then I had always imagined that he would strike from overhead, taking advantage of his position on a bough, but this python, at any rate, decided to attack from the ground.

The threatened animals showed no knowledge of their danger but, by what I think must have been for them merely a very lucky chance,

they gradually fed towards a patch of ground where the grass had been eaten short. There, the python would have had no chance of approaching them unseen; and accordingly he made no attempt to follow the animals, but very quietly went back to his old position on the branch, to wait for better fortune next time.

Chapter Twelve

THE WART-HOG AND THE FOREST-PIG

CHAPTER XII

The Wart-hog and the Forest-pig

I

WITH many animals, when you see several together, it is quite impossible to guess their relationships. But although you may often see one old Wart-hog by himself, when you see a number together, you may be quite sure that it is a family party out for a walk; mother, father, and the children—or possibly mother and the children alone.

The whole of the life of this creature seems to be associated with his home. If he is disturbed he will not turn and fight, although he has very powerful tusks which could do a lot of damage; he will make straight for the hole (like a gigantic rabbit-hole) in which he lives. But if he is pursued, instead of scuttling to safety and leaving the entrance of the home unprotected, as a rabbit would do, he will

turn, however hot the chase, and go in backwards so as to face his enemy with his tusks.

The young ones, of course, are not so smart at making for home, and consequently they are preyed on by the leopard, the lion and the hyena. Once I discovered a family of warthogs and as I was staying some time in the district I saw them repeatedly. But the first real meeting was unfortunate, for I came upon the mother and four little ones very suddenly so that we were all considerably startled. The mother bolted for home, but the little ones very foolishly scattered in all directions. That time there were no evil results, but on other occasions those foolish children were not so fortunate; for by the time I moved on, a week later, only two of them were left.

At another time I photographed a family drinking at a water-hole and wallowing in the water just as the rhino does. I was carefully hidden and my presence was not suspected. After a while the mother left—but she forgot to count her children. Four went with her but the fifth was enjoying himself and stayed be-

hind. Suddenly he realized that he was alone and hurried out of the river-bed. He had not seen the family depart, and he seemed to imagine that they had gone on, whereas in fact they had gone back the way they had come. Off he went, in great excitement, and then in a minute or two he came back, completely lost, looking this way and that, and listening, but quite unable to discover where his family had gone. At last he put his nose to the ground and tracked their scent till he found the path they had taken; and then away he went at full tilt, overtaking them a hundred and fifty yards from the water-hole. I have no doubt that his mother was very cross, and rated him soundly for getting lost; but I, the unseen witness, knew what she knew—that the truant returned before she had even discovered his absence!

The wart-hog derives his name from the fact that he always has big warts on either side of his face. I think he is a short-sighted animal for he seems to do a great deal of listening: and often, when, being out of the wind, I have stood perfectly still among some trees, wart-hogs have walked unsuspectingly to within fif-

teen yards of me—and then suddenly bolted at great speed for home.

2

The Forest-pig is related to the wart-hog, but although the two creatures have in common certain characteristics of the pig species, they are different in appearance, the forest-pig being of a dark reddish color with long hair at the back of the neck and round the shoulders. The forest-pig is by no means common: indeed, during many journeys I have only seen him on three occasions. Last year I stalked a couple for half an hour in fairly open country some distance from any forest. Then I saw that like all members of the pig tribe they would repeatedly stop to listen for a few seconds on the chance of locating enemies, and afterwards trot off again, to stop and listen once more a little farther on. It would have been interesting to have followed them to their home, but they led me at last to some thick bush country which I found impenetrable.

Chapter Thirteen

BIRDS

CHAPTER XIII

Birds

CENTRAL AFRICA is a paradise for birds both large and small; and indeed there are so many varieties, particularly of small birds, that it would probably weary any but the scientific reader if I attempted to describe them all. On the other hand, many of them are intensely interesting to study, and these I must deal with.

Group 1

The Ostrich is always a beautiful sight against the Central African landscape, where you will invariably see a few of the birds dotted here and there, mixing peacefully with zebra, kongoni and gazelle. There is something infinitely restful, and at the same time beautiful, in the sight.

Nevertheless, the life of the ostrich is by

no means the peaceful affair that one might expect. Although King Fashion's latest decrees have ended ostrich farming, the bird has still many enemies, especially the lion, who will kill the full-grown bird, the cheetah, who eats the young birds, and the hyena, who eats ostrich chickens and has a passion for ostrich eggs.

Consequently, the bird is extremely wary. He does not get alarmed at an intruder's approach, for he knows the protective value of his great speed; but he is always watchful, and as soon as he decides that it is advisable to move, off he goes—steadily and without the slightest suggestion of panic—to a distance of a hundred and fifty yards. That, apparently, is his idea of a margin of safety, and if he can he will keep it between himself and anything that he regards as dangerous or even suspicious.

When the breeding season comes, the mother bird sits down and by turning herself round and round scrapes out a little hollow in the earth, flattening its surface with her wings. There she lays her eggs, from eight to sixteen in number. Occasionally two mothers will share

a nest, and then the eggs, which are very large, will make quite a display.

The ostriches appear to be good parents—so long as danger is not too pressing. The mother will put three or four eggs on the ground beside her, and the contents of these will be used as food for the young birds when first hatched out: and later the chickens will be moved out of the open and hidden for safety's sake in the grass. I have been told of the remarkable action of the parent ostriches when a fire is raging and the grass burning immediately around the hollow in which lie the eggs. Then both birds will rush to water, hurry back, and stand shaking the water from their wet wings on to the nest before stamping out the smoldering fire.

In view of such facts as those, it is all the more extraordinary that these parents should at times appear to consider their own safety before that of their offspring. Yet that is undoubtedly the case. When sitting, they stretch out the body with the neck along the ground so as to be as inconspicuous as possible: and when danger—be it hyena or man—approaches, both

parents desert the nest and the eggs, to reach a safe distance from the intruder.

Some people imagine that the ostrich never drinks (and I am assured that that is at any rate the case with the ostriches in certain zoölogical gardens): but years ago I took cinematograph pictures in Central Africa of three of the birds, a male and two females, drinking from a pool. Clearly the birds thought it a moment of particular danger (and in that I think they were right), so perhaps they think it wise to drink as seldom as possible. But drink on that occasion these three birds certainly did. First the male stood on guard while the two females drank, and then while they stood on the watch, he began to drink—and very daintily he did it. Then all three began to dress and trim their feathers by the edge of the pool: a quaint and amusing sight because, whether they realized it or not, the water reflected them exactly as a mirror would have done.

A procession of ostriches running in single file is a particularly beautiful sight as their long legs move gracefully in a sort of prance. In black and white they stand out against the

BALLET DANCERS OF THE BUSH

A procession of ostriches suggests a group of ballet dancers against a painted curtain. The birds are extremely wary for they have many enemies and their legs are their only protection.

VULTURES

When the hyena and the jackal have left the remains of a kill, the vultures descend to finish the feast. On the left three sentinels are seen, on the right a quarrelsome group are gorging themselves on a lion kill which they will not leave until the bones are picked clean.

Some Birds of Central Africa

In the upper left hand picture stands the greater bustard, a bird often weighing twenty pounds. To his right is the secretary bird in his swallow-tail coat. The paternal marabou stork with his huge bill and the gracefully crowned crane are seen below.

THE FISH-EAGLE AND FLYING FLAMINGOS

The white-headed fish-eagle is fairly common in the region of Lake Victoria but seldom seen elsewhere. Flamingos are found near all the great lakes often flying in gigantic flocks composed of thousands upon thousands of birds.

brownish green, like ballet dancers against a painted curtain.

The Secretary Bird is not so much like anything else that we know in the bird world as like one of the thinner members of the Pickwick Club in a swallow-tailed coat. He stands about four feet high, and always struts with his long thin legs coming high off the ground. When you first see him, you may think he is merely a simpleton showing off: but not a bit of it. For all his elegance, he is hard at work, searching the grass for the snakes, lizards, frogs, and other creatures that are his food. To and fro he goes, working over a suitable patch of ground, and when he sees anything that will go towards a meal, he rushes forward or jumps sideways, trying to secure it before it can dart into a hole. If he is lucky in that, he holds his wings high in the air and does a remarkable dance—as it seems—with the object of stamping his victim to death.

The secretary bird's nest is usually made of twigs, on the top of a very thick bush or a tall thorn tree, and there the mother bird will lie

flat on her eggs, while the father continues his energetic search for food, no doubt becoming even more agile as he thinks of the extra mouths he will shortly have to feed.

One of the enemies of the secretary bird is the Buzzard, who will try to rob him of his prey. Once I watched a fight between these two. Directly the secretary bird made a capture and rose in the air to fly to the nest, the buzzard attacked him. But when the secretary bird, presumably having been plundered of his gains, went to the ground again, the buzzard sat on a thorn tree and watched him, apparently deciding that there was no sense in wasting more energy until the secretary bird had something fresh in his beak for him to steal!

I have little to say of the Greater Bustard, a bird that may weigh twenty pounds and often measures seven or eight feet from wing tip to wing tip. He is very trusting, and will wait quietly in the grass while you pass him; and even when he is disturbed he will only move a short distance. Consequently he is easy prey

when food is required for the pot—and that, to most people, is his chief source of interest.

The Ground Hornbill is a very unwieldy bird, not unlike a turkey. He is not at all shy, and if you approach him he will only waddle along in front of you without attempting to fly, even if you come within twenty yards. He lives on a diet of fruits and berries, pleasantly varied with reptiles and insects.

I have never been so fortunate as to find and photograph the nest of this bird in Central Africa, though I have often studied his relations at close quarters in Borneo. It is likely that the habits of the two branches of the family are much the same, and therefore I would mention the curious behavior at nesting time which I have seen in Borneo. There, the bird nests in a hole in a tree, and when the eggs are laid the male bird plasters up the mouth of the hole to protect the mother bird and the eggs from the raids of monkeys, leaving only sufficient space for her to put out her beak so that he may feed her by regurgitation.

Guinea Fowl are usually found in numbers of from twelve to twenty-five, but recently in Tanganyika I saw as many as two hundred at a time, running along on a flat, open piece of ground—a dazzling sight. There, too, I saw —and for that matter photographed—one of the terrible sights of the bush: the capture of a guinea fowl by a cheetah, who sprang suddenly into the midst of the flock, seized one of the running birds by the neck and made off with it. It is doubtless because of such incidents as this, that the guinea fowl will often give warning of any stealthy approach; thereby—since other creatures also act on the warning —entirely ruining the chances of an observer who may have stalked a herd of zebra or a troop of baboons for nearly an hour!

Group 2

You can always see Vultures in Central Africa in the early morning. They are the last of the scavengers. When the lion has left the remains of his kill, the hyena and the jackal start the scavenging in the night, but at dawn

the vultures will be aloft, flying in great circles and at a great height. As daylight comes the hyena and the jackal slink to cover, and then the vultures plane down to finish the feast.

Sometimes at an early hour you may see a single vulture in the sky, but directly he sights the kill others will appear as if from nowhere: and soon a large number of the creatures will be driving off the lingering jackals and setting to work. The vulture hunts by sight, so that it is the lowest that finds the prey, and others, far aloft, who cannot see the dead animal on the ground, see their brother wheeling down and quickly follow.

They are not peaceable birds, and they squabble and fight over the meal, so that often a considerable number of feathers will be left on the ground when at last they fly away: but that is not till the bones of the animal are picked absolutely clean. Sometimes the birds will gorge themselves so heartily that they cannot rise from the ground, and even those who for one reason or another have failed to get the best of the meal have to take quite a long run before they rise into the air, in a way that al-

ways reminds me of an airplane about to take off.

With the vulture at the feast you will see the Marabou Stork; but he plays the part of the poor relation taking what crumbs can be spared. He is a grandfatherly-looking creature, with a big bill, a large pouch in the position—more or less—of a beard, large legs and powerful wings. But I always think he lacks spirit in proportion to his size. I have never seen more than three or four at a feast, and those few will strut in a stately way around the edge, apparently not daring to interrupt the vultures, who are only a third of their size, but popping in now and again to seize a piece of the meat when nobody seems to be looking. Then, when at last the meal is done, the marabou stork will go with the vultures to drink, and both types of scavenger will stand or squat for hours in the warm sun till the time comes to go aloft again and search for a roosting-place in which to stay till the next morning's meal.

It is a curious sight to see the scavengers at a water-hole, side by side with zebra and kon-

goni and other animals in whom they take not the slightest interest—so long as they are alive. But by the next morning one of those very animals may have provided a dinner in turn for the lion, the hyena, the jackal, and lastly the marabou storks and vultures who are now sharing their watering-place!

Another scavenger is the Fork-tailed Kite. He, like the marabou stork, quite definitely plays second fiddle to the vultures and only gets a look-in when they have finished or while they are squabbling. He is chiefly interesting because of his curious flight, in which he manages his tail so that while flying in circles he can suddenly descend to the ground in a fraction of a second, pick up a tit-bit, and fly off with it. With the business of scavenger he couples that of camp-follower, carrying off any food that may be thrown away. There is no difficulty in studying him for he will circle round and round your camp as you sit watching him.

Group 3

The Tick Bird is an eater of animal parasites. He is about the size of a thrush, but his actions

bear more resemblance to those of the woodpecker. He is always to be found on such animals as the giraffe, the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus and the eland, and his mission in life seems to be to make a systematic search of these animals for the parasites. He works diligently, poking his beak into all sorts of corners and crevices, and apparently missing nothing. He will often be seen hanging, even, on the underlip of the giraffe, an animal which seems to carry parasites which particularly appeal to him; indeed it is no exaggeration to say that I have seen as many as thirty tick birds on a single giraffe at one time.

Of course, this sort of thing must occasionally prove uncommonly ticklish for the animal, and now and again you will see him suddenly whisk his tail to brush the birds off: whereupon the tick birds will lie flat to avoid the blow—and immediately afterwards set to work again.

Anyone who stalks big game has a particular interest in these birds, but not a very friendly one: for although their presence sometimes discloses the whereabouts of the animals, they give

warnings to the animals also, and particularly to the more dangerous creatures such as the rhino. Many and many a time, as I have related elsewhere, I have stalked a rhino and felt certain that I should succeed in getting close enough for my pictures, when suddenly these birds have given the alarm, uttering a shrill harsh squawk which immediately put the rhino on his guard.

Other birds, such as the Buff Backed Heron and the Egret, live particularly with the elephant and the buffalo when in swampy country, and often the sight of them is one's first warning of the presence of these animals, who may be securely hidden in papyrus or elephant grass, until the fluttering up and settling down again of the birds gives them away.

Group 4

There are few hunting grounds for birds so good as the Great Lakes. There you can see the Pelican and the Flamingo among many others —the flamingo sometimes in millions,[1] but the

[1] The proofreader suggested that the word "millions" must be a mistake for "thousands." But it is not!

pelican usually in groups of two or three.

Sometimes, on approaching one of the lakes, you will think, as you first see it from a distance, that the water has turned pink—and then, as you arrive on the shores of the lake, you will hear an indescribable sound, and find that you are seeing the pink-like bodies of thousands upon thousands of flamingo. If the birds take to flight, the sound grows in volume as they rise, and at the same time you see one of the most marvelous sights to be observed in Africa. All that pink beauty will rise from the water, circle slowly, and fall again either on the same spot or perhaps a hundred yards away. I know of nothing that gives me so much cause to stand and stare, entranced.

The pelicans are perhaps rather less attractive, but they are very interesting. Once, many years ago, I saw a group of as many as a hundred and fifty staying for a week at the upper end of Lake Naivasha, and I was fortunate in being able to get within fifty yards of them in a small boat; but nowadays I think myself lucky if I see even a couple together.

It is always interesting to watch pelican, be-

cause they seem to have some method of communicating ideas, so that when they are in single file they all turn at the same moment, exactly like soldiers on parade.

There are no fish in Lake Naivasha, and consequently you do not find there the big spotted African Kingfisher: but you do find countless other water-birds from the Cormorant to a very small Kingfisher. The birds seem to live chiefly on frogs, and I have spent many interesting hours studying the different methods by which they catch them: for example, the Heron will stand perfectly still until a frog comes to the surface, while the Stork will shuffle with his feet till the frogs are scared and jump.

Although the Crowned Crane is usually found near water, I have also seen him many miles from the lakes, searching for food on the plains. He is quite common, living at peace with the natives, but not so easy to approach when away from the lakes. Three things will be noticed about this bird: his amusing way of dancing, his mournful cry, and his very grace-

ful flight. Sometimes you will see forty or fifty sailing past you together, and you will be compelled to stop in admiration: but to appreciate the grace of the flight to the full you must see it in slow motion on the cinematograph screen. Then you will know the meaning of the phrase, "a poem in motion."

The White-headed Fish-eagle is a handsome bird, fairly common on Lake Victoria but otherwise seldom seen. By the side of the lake you will often see either one or two fish-eagles perched on a branch: you will hear them too, for, throwing back their heads almost to touch their bodies, they make a curious noise which in the distance might almost be mistaken for a laugh.

Chapter Fourteen

THE HYENA AND THE JACKAL

CHAPTER XIV

The Hyena and the Jackal

I

ONE afternoon, many years ago, while seeking for a chance of flashlight photographs, I crawled on all fours down a sort of tunnel that ran through very thick bush—the track, undoubtedly, of one of the larger animals. Suddenly, as I crept forward, I heard a very faint pad-pad-pad directly ahead of me and coming swiftly nearer: and before I had time to do more than begin going backwards, I saw in the darkness—almost filling the tunnel and only three yards in front—the fierce head of a wild creature.

For an instant I thought I was face to face with a lion in a position from which escape was impossible, and the sweat came on my forehead. Then, to my relief, I realized that this was no lion, but a Hyena.

I think he was as much surprised and startled as I was, and for two seconds we stared at each other. Then—and probably it is fortunate that I gathered my wits earlier than he did—I pulled myself together and let out so loud and terrifying a yell that he turned and bolted.

That was my first experience of the hyena, and as the memory of his face staring at me out of the darkness haunted my dreams afterwards for many nights, it did not make me love him. Subsequent meetings have confirmed and even strengthened my dislike. Now, when I have known him for thirty years, I can only say that I consider him a most repulsive animal for whom I cannot find a good word to say.

His appearance is distinctly against him, and his habits and character are in keeping with his appearance—or even worse.

He stands about three feet high and (without measuring his tail) from four to five feet long. His front legs are longer than those at the back and his head sits on big shoulders, so that he always looks as if he is standing up to make a speech—although that is certainly not the purpose to which he puts his powerful jaws.

THE FURTIVE SCAVENGER OF CENTRAL AFRICA

Murderer, thief, bully and coward the hyena is the symbol of all that is loathsome. His ordinary food is carrion; his victims only those creatures that are wounded or defenseless.

THE JUMPING HARE

The jumping hare is like a diminutive kangaroo. Like the kangaroo he can travel

As to his habits and character—well, he is, among other things, a murderer, a thief, a bully and a coward. He carries with him everywhere a repellant smell. In his home there is an added and almost worse smell. He has a reputation for being bold, because he will steal into the lighted streets of towns and will trespass into camps: but he will only do that in a slinking sort of way, ready to run at the slightest alarm. And on the other hand, while he will rarely attack anything that has power to defend itself, he will always attack such things as cattle, animals heavy with young, women far from home, native babies, young animals, and young birds of any species provided that they are too small either to peck or to fly.

He eats anything that smells like flesh, from an animal-hide strap to a dead rhinoceros; it does not matter to him how old or tainted a carcass may be; and he prefers to come late to a feast when someone else has done the possibly dangerous work of the kill. Scavenging is his principal business and he does it thoroughly—as long as darkness lasts, but seldom in the day. He has been called the graveyard of the Afri-

can native, because most of the tribes, instead of burying their dead, leave them in the open for him to eat: and if he can find a sick man, incapable of wielding a weapon, that is as good for him as a dead one.

No, I do not like the hyena!

I like neither the look of him, nor the smell of him, nor his habits, nor the sound of him. He is a pest, and a particularly evil one at that. He is the kind of creature on whom men do not waste good bullets, because poisoned food is both more effective and more appropriate. And I, animal lover though I am, cannot blame them.

* * * * *

Once when I was far from camp, night fell too quickly for me to return, and I decided to sleep on the ground. The spot I chose was in an open plain of short grass, almost level for four miles, except where a river had bitten deep into the ground, with sloping banks fifty yards in front of me. When I awoke just before dawn, I saw three hyenas with meat in their mouths, slinking forward in single file towards the river. Then I saw the remains of a zebra, and I knew

that although I had heard nothing a lion had killed only a hundred yards from where I slept. Keeping perfectly still, I watched the scene, and saw four more big hyenas coming in the opposite direction, away from the river, but towards the dead zebra, doubtless for further supplies. An eighth animal came to meet them, carrying in his teeth a big lump of flesh, and one of the returning party appeared to offer to help in the carrying. At first the offer was refused, but five minutes later I saw the hyena put down his load for the other to pick up; and then the meat-carrier and the ex-meat-carrier disappeared together towards the river.

At that I got up to look into matters more closely. There was very little left by now of the zebra, but two hyenas were still tearing at the bones while vultures, soared overhead.

Going to where, a little earlier, I had seen the hyenas disappear out of sight, I found almost a beaten path leading to a rocky place riddled by many tunnels. It might have been interesting to see still farther, for undoubtedly these tunnels housed a large family of the dreadful scavengers: but I was beaten to a re-

treat by the absolutely appalling stench that arose from it—the indescribable odor of certainly not less than eight large hyenas and doubtless many youngsters.

Hyenas sometimes work in large packs, as many as twenty together, and these packs often become very dangerous and fierce.

Innumerable tales could be told to bear out what I have said about this animal's indiscriminate eating and his cowardly habit of preying upon the weak. But two must suffice.

I once met a hunter whose 'boy' had left outside the tent an entire collection of heads and horns which had accumulated in several days' shooting. In the morning, all that were found were a few mangled bits of horn and bone over a hundred yards away—and the tracks of a hyena.

Six years ago, I was traveling with George Outram when it became necessary for one of us to stay behind with the bullock wagons while the other went ahead. Outram volunteered to stay, but he was beset by darkness and forced to camp, the bullocks being outspanned and allowed to feed. Directly afterwards, Outram

heard a bellow forty yards away, and on rushing to the spot he found that one of the poor beasts, unable to run or protect itself, had been set upon by a hyena, and its inside had actually been torn out of its body.

The hyena can travel very fast—indeed I have known one to keep pace beside me only nine yards away when I was on horseback and the terrified horse was going at full tilt. I have no doubt that if the horse had been without a rider it would have been attacked; but the hyena, as I have said, likes his victims to be helpless, and therefore would not be likely to attack even a much desired horse while a man was on its back. The hyena's method of business is to prowl round in the darkness till something comes easily his way. He will wait in the background while the lion eats the best of the dinner, and then steal in for the less appetizing remains: and even then he will flee at dawn when the vulture comes. He will prowl round a camp till all is silent and then slink forward to gather up anything that anyone has left.

Often, as you camp at night, you know that the hyena is not far away. As darkness comes

on, he draws closer, and then he lets out a wail. And as he waits you will hear him again and again, for he is not made of the stuff which is patient. As hunger grips him, you may hear his laugh—which is certainly no laugh at all: but more probably you will hear a sound like the terrible wail of a demented person, or, when it comes not from a single animal but from a pack, like the anguished cries of many souls in torment.

Till half through the night, this awful sound will rend your ears. Then suddenly it will cease —and you will know that at last the prowling hyenas have found something to satisfy them.

2

Amid the wailing and laughing of the hyena, you will hear also the yelps of the Jackal. This creature is very common throughout Central Africa, but although he too is a scavenger, one does not condemn him as one condemns the hyena. He is much smaller, being about the size of a fox, and there is therefore some excuse for his not tackling animals stronger than himself.

And at any rate, he does put up some show of resistance when the vultures claim the remnants of the lion's kill.

I once watched by one of these kills and saw the hyenas and jackals devouring what they could find, and one jackal tearing off a piece of meat and hiding it thirty yards away. The vultures came at daylight and the jackals showed fight. But while the struggle continued, one vulture discovered the jackal's hidden store of meat and made off with it, so that when at last the vultures triumphed and that cute little jackal consoled himself with the thought of his buried treasure, he was to suffer a sad disappointment!

In a country as hot as Africa scavenging is doubtless necessary, for pestilence would quickly spread if bones were not picked clean. It is not an occupation which excites the watcher's admiration, but at least it seems less distasteful with the fox-like jackal than with the evil-smelling and greedy hyena.

Chapter Fifteen

ANTELOPES

CHAPTER XV

Antelopes

I

THE Eland is the largest of the antelope and truly a magnificent creature, standing nearly six feet high, the male having a fine set of horns, spiral at the base and often nearly three feet long.

In the morning you may see these beautiful and very harmless animals browsing slowly in the direction of a shady spot where, unless they are disturbed, they will rest until the heat of the day has passed. In the afternoon, they will rise, mix with such animals as the zebra and the gazelle, and feed slowly towards water. You will very likely see from seven to fourteen in a herd, and very lovely they will look.

But at the water-hole the eland will be more watchful, waiting for their neighbors to go down first and moving quickly away at the

slightest alarm. As darkness falls, they will become more and more alert, more and more suspicious, more and more ready to bolt. For the eland share another thing besides neighborhood and company with the zebra and gazelle: they too are hunted in the night by the hungry lion.

2

The Oryx is also food for the lion, but not nearly so often does he fall a victim, for he is well armed and able to render a good account of himself. His two horns are straight and sharp, and over three feet long, and a charging lion could be impaled upon them: indeed, I think that the lion knows the danger and respects the oryx accordingly, for although there is no doubt about the hunting, it is comparatively rare for the body of a lion-killed oryx to be found.

This animal lives mostly above the Equator, and I have only seen four south of the Line, although in the north I have known herds of as many as a hundred and fifty. Seeing a big herd keeping close together, you are rather reminded —because of their horns—of a company of soldiers marching with fixed bayonets. But

more frequently you will see the oryx mixing with Grévy zebra and smaller animals. I once crouched behind a tree whilst large herds of Grévy zebra and oryx thundered past amid a cloud of dust, within a few yards of me, in a stampede—a wonderful sight, and a thrilling one, since but for the tree I should have stood a good chance of being trampled to death.

The oryx is yet another animal of whom it has been said that he can live without drinking; but here I can refute the statement, for I have watched him at a water-hole every day for a month. Doubtless, as in other cases, the legend arises from the ability of the animal occasionally to go without water for long stretches. But there is a limit to that ability, as I realized when I saw two oryx arrive late one afternoon at the water-hole, obviously in the last stages of distress from thirst. The poor creatures came straight to the water without troubling to look to right or to left, staggered in a sort of run to the brink, and drank as if they would never stop.

In the ordinary way, I think the oryx is no more prepared to remain parched than any other creature. Nor is he always even willing to

wait his turn at the water, for at a water-hole where over-fed vultures obstructed the way I have seen the oryx push them off with their horns. And the oryx will not easily leave his drinking, once he has started, before his thirst is quenched: for if, when a herd is at water, one animal gives the alarm, although the whole herd will at once thunder up the bank to safety, they will then hesitate, and look down, and if the danger does not mature they will slowly move back.

I once had the privilege of watching a very beautiful example of the family instinct. A herd of oryx was wandering across an open patch of ground, when a cow dropped behind. A bull stopped, looked at her, and then began slowly to circle round her, watching every point of the compass for a possible enemy. After a time a calf was born. Still the bull kept guard, circling round and round, until at last, in less than half an hour, the little calf had managed to get on to its feet. Then the mother and her new baby started slowly in the direction taken by the herd, while the bull, still watchful and alert, followed behind them.

Chapter Sixteen

GAZELLES

ELAND AT THE WATER-HOLE

Standing nearly six feet high with graceful spiral horns often nearly a yard long the male eland is a truly magnificent creature. He is the largest member of the antelope family.

PARCHED THROATS

Zebras and eland are on friendly terms and drink together at the same water-holes. In the dry season they sometimes have to dig down from four to six feet to reach water.

CHAPTER XVI

Gazelles

I

THE natives call the Gerenuk "the little giraffe," and certainly the name is appropriate.

He shares with the giraffe the quality of being almost indistinguishable against a background of bush, and indeed, if it happened that your first sight of him was when he was feeding, you would probably be sorely puzzled to know what kind of creature you were seeing. All you would probably notice would be a streak of white about two feet above the ground, and a moving head some three feet higher, among the bushes.

When the gerenuk feeds off the leaves of a bush, he stands on his hind legs, with his forefeet resting against the slender branch: and as his forelegs are exceedingly thin, it is probable

that they either would not be seen at all or would be confused with the thinner branches of the tree. The long streak of white is on his stomach, and that shows clearly; but his body and his long neck, like those of the giraffe, fade easily into a background of leaves.

Gerenuk are often seen in the neighborhood of the giraffe, not associating with them, but sometimes only fifty yards away. They are comparatively scarce and do not travel in herds: usually one sees a couple, either two females or a pair, although occasionally I have noticed four at a time.

They are exceedingly shy, and when disturbed will at once make off, with heads held forward, looking rather like greyhounds. Because of this shyness, they are very difficult either to study or to photograph—and indeed the picture here reproduced was only obtained after a stalk that lasted for three days! But they repay study, partly because comparatively little is known of their habits. It is generally assumed, for instance, that they do not drink anything except the dew which they find on leaves. Whether this is so or not I cannot definitely

say, but it is a point which I should very much like to make clear, for one so often hears that a particular animal does not drink and then is able to prove that that is certainly not the case. I have spent many hours in trying to see the gerenuk at water; and once I thought I was about to succeed. I was waiting at a water-hole well north of the Equator where giraffe drank and I knew that several gerenuk lived close by. One day, one of the little creatures came feeding steadily towards me until he was within twenty-five yards of the water-hole. Then he stopped, and looked at the water as if trying to decide whether it interested him or not. Feeling confident that at last I was to obtain the proof I wanted, I trained my camera on him and waited. But alas! The sight of the water did not lure him nearer, and in a minute or two he turned and walked quietly away.

I know that when a gerenuk was shot by a man who was collecting specimens for a museum over a pint of water was found in its stomach: and I find it hard to believe that that was entirely the result of drawing dew from

the leaves of trees. So I still hope to get that picture.

2

The Water-buck is shy. He does not make himself conspicuous like many of the animals I have described, but lives in secluded corners such as little valleys near forests and rivers, or often in small open spaces. He is a fine-looking fellow, as large as our red deer, with a curious white ring circling his neck—a design which has originated a superstition among the natives, who will not eat his flesh lest the white ring should choke them!

3

Thomson's Gazelle (known to his intimates as "Tommy") is a pretty little creature with a rich coat of pale brown decorated with a black stripe along the flank and a patch of white underneath. He is very tame and has beautiful limpid eyes, which make it painful to shoot him, even for food.

IMPALLA GRAZING

The most attractive of all gazelles the impalla is apparently the most light-hearted of animals. He roams in herds numbering from eight to thirty.

THE DAINTY THOMSON'S GAZELLE

The Thomson's Gazelle—or "Tommy" as his friends call him—is a pretty little creature with limpid eyes and a pale, brown coat decorated with a black stripe and a patch of white underneath.

A GERENUK FEEDING

The gerenuk, or "little giraffe," stands on his hind legs with his forefeet resting on a slender branch and feeds off the leaves of trees. These creatures are scarce and comparatively little known.

The same may be said of the Grant's Gazelle, an animal distinguished by its beautiful horns; but he is of very little use for food as his flesh is very often infested with parasites.

But I think the most atractive of all the gazelles are the Impalla. Sometimes they are seen drinking among oryx, zebra and one or two jackal, and I have photographed them among a troop of baboons crossing a glade. But for the most part these creatures feed in herds, close to other animals, but not mixing with them.

Like the zebra, the impalla do a good deal of fighting amongst themselves at the water-holes, and do it with gusto; yet I cannot help regarding them as happy and frolicsome, light-hearted animals, for they have a delightful habit of jumping when disturbed. You may see a herd numbering anything from eight to thirty-five, sometimes entirely of one sex and sometimes of males, females and youngsters to-gether; and whether they be in open bush or in wooded country, you will see them jumping. Last year, coming back to camp in a car after dark, I drove within twenty yards of a small

herd, so that the spot-light shone upon them. And in the light of its beam they jumped backwards and forwards—just like a party of elfin figures dancing in the moonlight.

Chapter Seventeen

THE ZEBRA

CHAPTER XVII

The Zebra

I

ON any open landscape in Central Africa you will see the Common, or Grant's Zebra, probably in large numbers. Because of his broad and bright stripes, he is singularly picturesque, and certainly his presence is desirable from the pictorial standpoint. I am afraid, however, that most of the white inhabitants of Central Africa would not admit that he has any other virtue.

Personally, I like him, as any photographer must. But I recognize the justice of the settler's hate of him, for he is exceedingly destructive. Sometimes a lion will chase a large herd to the edge of an estate protected by triple barbed wire, and the zebra, in their terror, will destroy the entanglement by sheer weight of numbers, uprooting stakes so that the wire falls flat. And

later, before the wire can be re-erected, another herd will invade the estate, eating widely and trampling what they do not eat.

Consequently, the zebra is shot practically at sight. Moreover, a use has recently been found for his skin, with the result that quite a number of people are shooting large numbers of the animal in order to sell the skins for five shillings each. The zebra is regarded as the settler's worst enemy, and in my opinion it is only a matter of time before this beautiful animal which now appears common will become practically extinct. When that happens the plains of Africa will be almost unrecognizable to anyone who knows them as they are at present. Just as one looks at once for the grand sight of flamingo and pelicans on the Great Lakes, so one looks at once for the zebra on the plains; and against the green, or on the sky-line, one sees them—beautiful both in pattern and in outline.

To study the zebra, one must go to the water-holes. In the dry season you will find a river-bed, no longer carrying a torrent, but merely a sand-bottomed chasm with rocky sides. Along

this sandy bed, animals will have scraped holes, some two feet deep, others six feet deep, to reach the water. Down to these holes will come the animals to drink: zebra, kongoni, vultures, gazelles, wildebeest, eland, baboons and many other creatures. There the observer, having built himself a hide, can watch.

Suddenly he will see a single zebra come down among the rocks to the river-bed—a scout to see that all is safe. If this pioneer finds both water and safety, the whole herd will quickly come down to drink. But sometimes he will not find sufficient water, because the pools will have filled in: then three or four zebra will go down the river-bed in single file, showing a great deal of caution, and two of them will scrape new holes while the others keep watch.

The hidden observer will see much to interest him when once a big herd arrives. There will be numerous fights as the animals squabble for the best positions round the water-holes; or perhaps one crusty old fellow will be seen going to each hole in succession and kicking away the other animals from the water, until one bold

youngster will smack him in the ribs to teach him better manners.

It is a curious thing that although as a rule the stripes of the zebra make him very conspicuous, some conditions of light have exactly the opposite effect, so that on more than one occasion I have failed to see a herd of twenty-five or thirty of the animals only a hundred yards away until they moved.

When zebra sight a man, they will throw up their heads and trot off, half-looking back and apparently suspicious rather than actually scared; but if the watcher or hunter tries to cross the path they have just taken, instead of going on to greater safety they will come back, passing in front of the intruder, in anxiety, presumably, to reach the spot which they know to have been safe rather than having to explore the unknown distance.

2

The Grévy Zebra is a much bigger animal than his brother, with closer and more delicate markings and beautiful fluffy ears—a fine-

looking animal in every way. Like the oryx he is not much seen south of the Equator, and even for some miles north of it he is fast disappearing.

It is not disease that is the cause of this, for, strange to say, the zebra is immune from the fly and many other ills which attack somewhat similar animals. His annihilation is the act of man.

If you watch at a water-hole, you will see the Grévy zebra clattering down the rocky banks, often in a great hurry, because although they are friendly with other animals, they are very anxious not to be done out of their share of the water. Not only that, but even amongst themselves precedence must be observed, the males drinking first, then the mothers, and the youngsters last. Sometimes a greedy youngster, trying to drink out of its turn, will receive a gentle lesson and be made to wait until its mother has finished.

Chapter Eighteen

THE WHITE ANT

PAINTED HORSES OF THE PLAINS

With his broad, bright stripes the zebra is a singularly picturesque creature. Yet he is regarded as the settlers' worst enemy for he is very destructive of fences and crops.

THE APPALLING IDOL

An enormous, inert, greasy, whitish mass, the queen ant feed insatiably upon the food which her myriad subjects bring to her. Da and night at the rate of one a second she produces eggs for th propagation of the species.

CHAPTER XVIII

The White Ant

ANYONE who has read M. Maeterlinck's book, *The Life of the White Ant*, will realize how impossible it is to give any idea of the activities of this amazing little creature in less than a dozen pages. I can therefore do little more than refer the reader to that fascinating book, give one or two general statements, and then describe some of the observations which I have myself made.

I

In order even to begin to understand the white ant,[1] it is necessary to grasp two points.

(1) *The white ants have many enemies who could quickly exterminate them in an open fight.*

[1] There are, of course, many species of the white ant, and to some extent the habits vary with the species. I am here endeavoring to deal with what appear to be the general rules, common to all species, at any rate in Central Africa.

Therefore they build gigantic and almost impenetrable fortresses, wherein they live a life that is entirely self-contained, only occasionally making sorties in force to obtain supplies.

(2) *The propagation of their species is not done by individuals, but is left to one "queen" in each fortress, who produces eggs night and day at the rate of approximately one per second.*

Save for the existence and operations of this "queen," the race within a fortress would quickly become extinct: and therefore the one act of paramount importance is her maintenance coupled with the preparation of her successor.

Because of the first of these two points, the termites (as the white ants are called) have, among the large numbers that inhabit a single fortress, workers with allotted tasks of building, food supply, etc., and soldiers to repel invaders and to guard the workers in the event of a sortie. Within the fortress nothing is allowed to be wasted: even the dead are used as food,

and advantage is taken of the organs within the body of each insect so that excreta can be used both for building and for nourishment.

Because of the second point, the cell in which the "queen" lies is the center of all activity within the fortress, and the work done in connection with it forms the central purpose of that activity. Much of the structure of the fortress is designed to preserve an evenness of temperature around the "queen," and the elaborate architecture of rooms and galleries is mainly constructed to avoid disturbance within the "queen's" apartment.

2

The fortresses of the white ants are very numerous in some parts of Central Africa, and they rise to extraordinary heights above the ground. I have actually seen one that was twenty-five feet high—and to appreciate what that means, one must remember that the height of its builders is approximately one-eighth of an inch. Thus the white ants build fortresses over two thousand times their own height, a feat to

equal which man would have to construct a building of a height of two and a half miles!

Moreover, these ant-hills are impervious to rain and are so firmly constructed that I have seen an infuriated rhinoceros try to smash a small one with his horn, and fail to make an appreciable impression on it!

What is more, the ant-hills are not the mere lumps of thrown-up earth which they appear to be at first sight, but are exactly designed edifices containing rooms and galleries. When we build a house, its outside appearance interests us almost as much as its interior: but the white ant builds his fortress solely for use. He rarely goes outside it, and in any case he is blind, so that its outside does not interest him. But on the interior he lavishes a sense of design and a constructive ability which even man can hardly equal. He has contrived, too, an amazing system of "central heating" of which no one knows the secret.

Studying these marvelous creatures is a matter of the greatest difficulty, partly because of the strength of their homes, and partly because of their immediate reaction to changes of light

and heat. But nothing is more interesting.

On my most recent expedition to Central Africa, I selected an ant-hill that was seven feet high and began to dig into the ground by the side of it. I made a hole four feet wide and about eighteen inches deep, and then attacked the base of the ant-hill until at last I had cleared the central nest which lies partly below and partly above the surface of the ground.

Trying to do as little damage as possible to its surroundings, I lifted the nest (which measured rather more than a foot each way), and laid it on the ground. It was constructed of what seemed to be a finer material than the fortress above it, and through it numerous oblong galleries wound among pillars. Underneath it stood smaller pillars for its support.

Then I took a giant knife and split the nest horizontally, taking great care to cut only through the covering so as not to damage its occupant.

With this inner chamber of a temple at last laid bare before me, I gazed upon what is perhaps the most amazing spectacle of the many marvels of insect life.

I was looking into a bare chamber with a polished floor, oval in shape, and grooved so that the upper part of the covering fitted neatly on to the base. In the center of the floor, in a groove, lay the "queen"—or what Maeterlinck describes as "the enormous flabby inert greasy whitish mass of the appalling idol." She was certainly not a pleasing sight. She had a bloated, helpless look as she lay face downwards while a myriad of tiny ants appeared to inject food into the small but insatiable mouth on her insignificant head, or stroked her greasy sides, or picked up the eggs that came incessantly from her and carried them away; and half underneath her, attracting nobody's attention, lay her comparatively unimportant consort.

In an outer ring around this busy scene were the soldiers of the fortress (or a few of them), much more powerful-looking than the workers, heads outwards and armed with enormous pincers attached to their heads, ready to defend the mother of their race.

Even as I watched the extraordinary scene, the "queen" began to show signs of a distress which was probably shared by all the smaller

ants, for as I have said these creatures are peculiarly susceptible to alterations either of light or temperature. I therefore hurriedly restored the domelike top of the nest and replaced the whole in the space under the ant-hill from which I had taken it. And at the same time I carefully returned about a hundred ants who had strayed into open country through the hole.

But that certainly did not end the adventure, either for me or for the white ants.

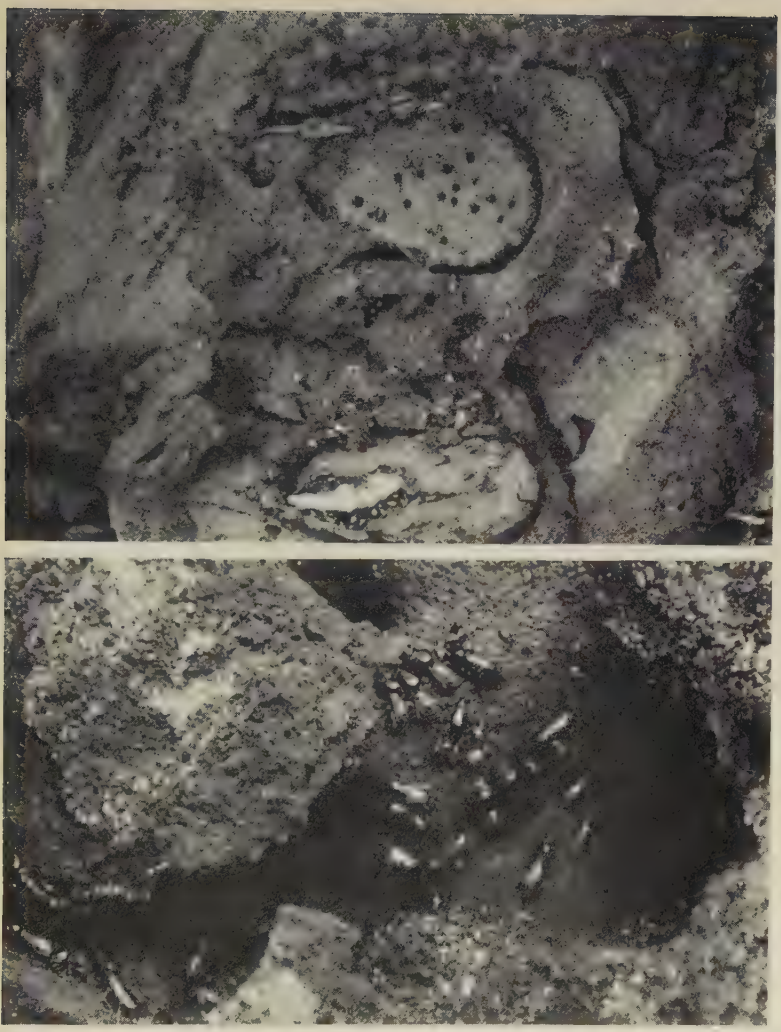
No sooner was the nest restored, than an investigation was made by its owners of the amount of the damage done to the galleries and other parts, and immediately an army of workers appeared and began to mend the gaps and to seal up those of the galleries which could not quickly be joined to the parts that ran into the rest of the ant-hill. Necessarily, the damage I had done to those galleries had been considerable: and yet in less than half an hour that part of the restoration was accomplished.

There remained, of course, much for the ants to do. Everything had to be put to rights, and even the great hole which I had dug had to be filled. Operations started at once, ants

pouring out to take part in it. No doubt it was partly the question of temperature which made matters so urgent; but there was also another reason for haste, as I was very shortly to discover.

Shortly before dusk, I left the hill for about an hour. When I returned, I found the fortress threatened with disaster. A large army of safari ants, the white ants' hereditary enemies, had discovered the great breach in the fortifications and had launched a big attack with the idea of penetrating into the citadel. Numerous white ant soldiers, some with the pincer weapon which I have described and others armed with a sort of syringe through which they appeared to squirt what must have been the equivalent of poison gas, were defending the breach, literally with their backs to the wall—or to the hole in the wall. Isolated battles between detached parties were in progress, but the main assault of the safari ants was clearly pressing back the defenders, so that very soon the white ants' fortress would have been over-run.

I felt horribly guilty. It was I, with no possible right on my side, who had made that



THE THRONE ROOM AND DAMAGED RAMPART

In the bare chamber seen above lies the queen ant, bloated, helpless and surrounded by her swarming subjects. Below busy workers are setting about the rebuilding of the ramparts which have just been broken.

THE CHAMELEON

His ability to change his color is not the chameleon's only remarkable characteristic. He has feet like hands, a remarkable prehensile tail and a tongue nearly as long as his body.

THE PRAYING MANTIS

The mantis gets its name from the fact that it is often seen in an attitude resembling a saint at prayer. He has a voracious appetite and eats any insect he can capture.

THE WHOLE FAMILY POSES

Like a family party at a circus, these rock rabbits are watching the movements of the stranger. The rock rabbit is not actually a variety of the rabbit. Zoologists cannot classify him exactly.

breach and brought war and almost certain destruction to the white ants. So there was only one thing to be done, and I did it quickly. I entered the war myself on behalf of the white ants, coming up in the nick of time like the Prussian Army at Waterloo. I demonstrated the superiority in battle of the tank over the infantryman: and very soon the attacking army, or the remnant of it, was routed.

Then I looked into the fortress, to see in what state the defenders were left. To my surprise I discovered that all the time the battle had been in progress, the workers, behind the backs of the army, had gone steadily on with their task, so that a new layer of cemented wall already covered the bottom of the hole.

Never, I think, have I watched anything so interesting as those hundreds of ants rebuilding their ramparts. It is a fact that the white ant is blind; but clearly he must have some sixth sense which renders the absence of eyes unimportant. Each ant, bringing a morsel of material, knew exactly where to lay it down, and each knew by what route to reach his own position. By the morning a quarter of the gap was

filled. By the second morning, the hole was only half its original size.

Unfortunately I could not stay to see the operation completed; but I trust that all was done before the army of attackers reappeared in greater strength.

Such a scene as this arouses a hundred questions which are as yet unanswerable. What is the white ant's sixth sense? What controlling force regulates the actions of these workers and soldiers? Did the ants rebuild their fortress out of a common instinct? Are they free or slaves? Is the wonderful design of their house a matter of chance, of instinct, or of thought?

It may be that one day some, at any rate, of these mysteries will be solved. For the present we can but watch—and wonder.

Chapter Nineteen

THE MONGOOSE AND THE ROCK RABBIT

CHAPTER XIX

The Mongoose and the Rock Rabbit

I

THERE are several species of the Mongoose in Africa, all of which I have met.

The white-tailed variety is comparatively large and not so very often seen. His color is gray and he has a long white tail. It is said that when bitten by a snake he rushes off to eat some herb which acts as an antidote: but I know of a case in which a white-tailed mongoose fought a deadly snake and was bitten twice before he succeeded in killing it and subsequently devouring it—and he took no notice of his wounds, from which he had no ill-effects.

The common mongoose is seen much more frequently. Sometimes as you approach the mound of earth in which he lives, he will see you thirty yards away and take cover in a great hurry; but at other times he will not appear at

all alarmed. I have stood within twelve yards of him when he was hunting without his being able to spare me a thought. He lives mainly on snakes and other small creatures, but I have photographed him nibbling at meat on the leg of a zebra after the scavengers had finished with a lion's kill.

The dwarf mongoose is my favorite: a jolly little chap with some cheeky tricks which rather remind me of those of the rock rabbit. On my last trip I came across a family of the dwarfs living, as this species often does, in a disused ant-hill. Directly they saw me, they bolted for home and disappeared. I waited for ten minutes, and then a head bobbed up, to be instantly withdrawn. Five minutes later, another youngster took a peep. Then the mother looked out, and at last everyone became interested in me and confidence began to grow, until eventually two of the youngsters came right out and ran into the grass.

That, apparently, was regarded as much too dangerous a place for them to play in, for immediately the old father ran out and brought them scuttling back in a great hurry. But I

continued to keep very still in order to convince the family of my utter harmlessness, and again a feeling of confidence set in so that a lot more peeping was done, two of the little animals squeezing their heads out of the mouth of a hole at the same time. By the time an hour had passed, father and mother had apparently agreed that after all I could hardly be as terrible as I looked, so that the whole family—seven in number—came out on to the ant-hill and the grass in front of me.

2

The Rock Rabbit is such an amusing little fellow, looking so much like a toy animal with a furry coat, that I always feel that he ought to run out to greet me as I approach his home, and ask to be picked up and petted.

But he never does that. On the contrary, a sentinel stays continually on the watch for intruders; and directly a warning is given, all disappear from sight. Many visitors to Central Africa, because of this habit, have never been able to locate him; and I must say that though

I have often watched him it was not until I had known him for twenty years that I was able to take his portrait.

It is quite useless, if you want to study him, to stay in the open: you must go as close as you can, and directly he takes to cover you also must hide yourself. Then, after a while, you will see a movement on the rocks, and one of the little fellows will pop up and look for you. If he sees nothing suspicious he will stay, and then one by one all his brothers and sisters and his father and mother—and possibly a few friends—will pop up beside him, and they will all stare like a family party at a circus.

When, only a few months ago, I at last succeeded in photographing these little animals, I stayed watching them for an hour. Everything had happened according to rule. The sentinel had given his warning, all had disappeared, and I had hidden myself quite effectively with the aid of bushes and grass and leaves. Then curiosity triumphed and all the family came to look for me. They knew perfectly well that I was only a very little distance away, but fortunately they were quite unable to find me.

MONGOOSE YOUNGSTERS

The dwarf mongoose is excessively shy, but it is also highly curious. These youngsters could scarcely wait five minutes before they came out to look at the photographer who had just frightened them into their burrow.

GENTLE CREATURES OF THE BUSH

The furry sentinel perched on the rock in the upper pictur is on the lookout to warn his fellow rock rabbits against intruder Below are three other rock rabbits spell-bound by curiosity.

There wasn't a great deal of room on the edge of the rock, and consequently there was so much pushing for position that two little fellows lost their places and had to struggle past their mother to get back again. After a while, they all seemed to gather confidence, and then they began to run about over the broken-up rock, disappearing and reappearing continually, and sometimes coming to within a few feet of where I was hidden.

Suddenly a mongoose passed only six feet from me, without paying me any attention, and vanished very close to the home of the rock rabbits. I was afraid that this intrusion might lead to trouble; but the rock rabbits did not seem to mind.

One thing that was very curious was to see two of them stamp a hind foot, just like the English rabbits do—although the rock rabbit is certainly not a variety of the rabbit, to whom his only real resemblance lies in his habit of living in a kind of rock warren. I really do not know to what animal family he does belong, and although—under the name of Hyrax—he is mentioned in the Bible, I believe his exact

classification still gives trouble to the zoölogists.

He makes his home among rocks, at any altitude, and has feet that are adapted to his surroundings, so that he can run on sloping rock with the utmost ease. And provided that he can find a sufficiency of grass and young shoots for his diet (for he is a strict vegetarian), he seems to be entirely contented. In fact, although he is certainly a trouble when a camp is pitched near his home—for at night he makes a terribly nerve-racking noise, worthy of a much bigger animal—he is altogether such a jolly little chap and so altogether harmless that I can only deplore, with the utmost earnestness, the fact that the softness of his coat has been found to be of value for the making of motor-rugs! He is so quaint and so lovable that he deserves a much better fate than that.

Chapter Twenty

CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

CHAPTER XX

Creatures Great and Small

I

THE Wildebeest is a grotesque-looking animal, with curving horns, bushy hair on the top of his head, long hair on the front of his face (giving him rather the appearance of having a Roman nose), and hair underneath his neck like a beard. In fact he rather resembles a comical old man. The natives of South Africa called him the Gnu, but the Dutch settlers re-christened him in their own tongue because they thought him like a wild variety of their cattle. Personally, when I see him on the sky-line, I am more reminded of the American bison.

I have once seen as many as five hundred wildebeest together, but generally the herds are smaller. They live peacefully with the zebra,

the gazelle and the giraffe; and they too are preyed upon by the lion.

The wildebeest's chief characteristic seems to be a curiosity which is even stronger in him than fear; for when fired at he will move off for a distance no greater than twenty or thirty yards, make an odd noise like a grunt, and then stand and stare at the disturber of his rest. He is a harmless and peaceful animal, and is at times positively playful—or at any rate, he appears to be playful although I have sometimes suspected that his antics, like those which I have seen performed by cattle in Yorkshire, are merely the result of his being bitten by flies.

At certain seasons, the wildebeest, like the eland and many animals of this kind, will become migratory and trek in search of fresh pastures. To me, there is in this fact one of the mysteries of animal life: how do the animals discover where young shoots of grass are to be found? For they do, and that immediately. I once camped near a very big herd of wildebeest who for several days showed not the slightest sign of restlessness. But one night I saw heavy rain-clouds over the hills twenty or

thirty miles away: and by the morning the herd of wildebeest and most of the other animals in the district had migrated. Perhaps they had smelt the rain in the air and had located it. I do not know. But undoubtedly they knew where to go for the fresh grass which they needed.

2

The Kongoni (whom the Dutch call the Hartebeest) is not nearly so plentiful in Central Africa as he used to be, for the lion and the leopard—and man—all take toll of him. In daylight he is particularly cautious, and indeed I know of no other animal so good at keeping a strict watch when on sentry duty: he is constantly alert and keen of eyesight, and I have known him to climb on a small ant-hill to get a better grasp of his surroundings. But he has no very efficient weapon, and at night he is an easy prey. He lives mostly in open country and like the wildebeest can move very swiftly: but —also like the wildebeest—he suffers badly from curiosity and after running a few yards will turn with a snort and look back. Cases

have been known of him attacking men, when wounded, but they are rare; for indeed he is a very harmless creature.

He is an ugly animal, but he puts his appearance, such as it is, to use, for the youngsters, who cannot rely for safety on speed, lie flat on the ground and trust to harmonization.

3

The Jumping Hare is not so much like a hare in appearance as like a little kangaroo, for he has kangaroo legs and can travel at a great speed by jumping as far as fifteen feet at a time.

He lives all day in a burrow, six or eight burrows forming a colony, and it is only by night that he is to be seen—indeed it is very likely that all you will see of him even then is the light from your lamp reflected in his eyes. In the darkness you see a pair of eyes—then another—then another, until you are convinced that you are almost surrounded by a large number of animals; and if you are new to the country you may wonder what the animals can be and possibly at length decide that you are

THE IGUANA

Despite his sinister and ugly appearance, the iguana is not a dangerous creature. He is defenseless and depends upon his arboreal haunts for safety.

AN IGUANA CLIMBING

The iguana knows that the first rule of tree climbing is to get a good purchase with both hands and feet. Unlike the monitor he lives inland in wooded country.

A Plague of Locusts

Locust plagues still continue in Central Africa. That a locust swarm literally darkens the land is obvious from the lower picture. Above locusts are seen devouring a plant.

READY TO DIVE

The monitor loves to bask near a river into which he plunges at the first sign of danger. His favorite food is the eggs the crocodile buries for hatching.

among a troop of lions. But if you use the spotlight of your car instead of an ordinary lamp, you will realize that all the trouble is caused by one or two little creatures, much about the size of the English hare, jumping along the bare grass.

4

Although the Aard-vark is plentiful in Central Africa, he is so rarely seen that the natives regard the sight of him as a sign of good luck. He lives on ants, and inhabits burrows which can be found wherever there are ant-hills; but he is a nocturnal creature, remaining in his burrow all day,—which is why he is not frequently seen.

He has a pig-like skin, long ears and a big muzzle, and long claws backed by very powerful muscles which enable him even to break through the extreme hardness of an ant-hill. And once he has made a hole, and ascertained that he is safe from interruption, he explores the galleries of the ant-hill with his long, slimy tongue, picking up all the ants that he can

find. When one compares the size of the aard-vark with that of the ant, one feels that it must be a tiresome job for him to find enough nourishment; but he goes on with it steadily till his appetite is satisfied.

5

The Serval Cat is a very beautiful creature, but he is not friendly, and he is very destructive, often killing purely for the killing's sake. He will sometimes raid the chicken runs of settlers, killing as many as twenty fowls and leaving their bodies behind him. The young serval cats look like very pretty kittens and one is tempted to stroke them—but that is not a thing that any man should do without a steel glove!

6

The first sign to tell you of the presence of the Porcupine will probably be a number of his quills lying on the ground. Then you will find his burrow, and if it is day-time you may be sure that he is within, for it is only at night that

he comes to feed on various kinds of herbage. When he is annoyed he stamps a hind foot, just as the rock rabbit does, and then erects his quills with a curious rattling noise. If he is attacked, he runs backward towards his enemy, and as his quills are very loosely held he leaves a number of them sticking painfully in his enemy's body or paws.

He is a very harmless creature—provided that he does not make his way into a garden: but there he is extremely destructive. Consequently, although the naturalist finds him interesting and amusing, the settler with some justice regards him as a nuisance.

7

Another little creature who is seldom seen by day is the Potto. In Central Africa he is considered very rare, but I think this is chiefly because he lives in the forest and is very difficult to see among dense foliage. He is a sad and sleepy-looking animal, very slow in movement, and rather with the appearance of a miniature bear.

8

Although the Scaly Ant-eater is nearly three feet long, he is rarely seen, partly because he lives mostly in trees. As his name implies, he feeds on ants. He is covered with scales, and when facing an enemy he rolls himself into a ball; and if that strategy does not succeed he can contract his scales so as to nip the fingers of a monkey or the nose of any inquisitive creature that comes too close.

Only on one occasion have I come across him, and then, curiously enough, he was not in a tree but on the ground: probably I intercepted him while he was passing from one tree to the next.

Directly I set up my camera before him he adopted his defensive position, keeping himself in a tight ball till my patience gave out. So I too tried the effect of strategy, removing the camera for a distance of twenty-five yards and hiding both it and myself behind a screen of leaves and grass. Then I told my boy to pick up the shy little ant-eater and put him down at a spot on which I had focused the camera.

Even this presented difficulties, for the ant-eater resented being picked up, and promptly shut his scales on to the boy's finger. But eventually he was put into position and the boy retired to a distance.

The ant-eater, still in a coil, very cautiously lifted his head and peeped out to see into what new world he had come. I then began to turn the handle of my cinematograph camera; but the sound of it made the ant-eater promptly coil himself up once more. Thinking that the only thing to do was to let him get used to the noise, I kept on, and after a while he took another peep—but only a peep; and then gradually, as the noise persisted but no immediate danger seemed to threaten, he became more confident until at last he dared to uncoil.

Yet even then he kept a paw in front of his face, peeping round the side of it every now and again, like a child playing at "Peep-bo." Finally he seemed satisfied that, whatever was causing the strange noise, it had nothing to do with him, and he straightened himself out completely and, dragging behind him a snake-

like tail, disappeared in search of a tree and some nice fat ants.

9

The Chameleon is quite common in Central Africa—but that does not mean that you will easily see him. You may be quietly smoking after lunch and your eyes may often stray to a bush or piece of foliage in front of you without noticing anything. Then suddenly, perhaps because of some very slight change in the light, you may realize that all the time a little chameleon has been sitting on a twig quite close to you. On the other hand, many and many a time you may get up and move away without that realization.

The chameleon's harmonization with his surroundings is marvelous. He quite literally fades into any background, and it is true that his color seems to change according to that of his surroundings.

But when once you have located him, he is an extraordinary creature to watch. He has many peculiarities, in one, at any rate, of which

he is unique: he is the only creature that can look forward with one eye and backward with the other at the same moment! In addition to that, he has feet that almost resemble a hand, a decidedly useful and prehensile tail, and a tongue that is nearly as long as his body. He lives on insects, catching them at long range with the tip of the tongue, which comes out and back again with lightning rapidity.

When I first photographed him about thirty-five years ago, I was taking still pictures with a camera that had a home-made shutter. I wanted a picture that would show him with his tongue outstretched; and the difficulty of course was to know just when the tongue was going to be protruded. I therefore studied the chameleon very closely, and discovered that there were clear signs to give me warning. First he would move his eye till it was trained on a fly, then he would puff out the sides of his face, next the tip of the tongue would be protruded for an instant—and finally, in a flash, the tongue would come out.

There is also a much rarer species known as the Horned Chameleon, because of the three

horns protruding from the front of his head. When he was discovered twenty years ago by the late Sir Frederick Jackson, I took the first moving pictures of him.

10

The Mantis is often seen in a curious attitude like a saint in prayer, and therefore is known as the Praying Mantis. He is extremely difficult to see when he is perched on foliage, because his body closely resembles his surroundings, and his wings are the color of leaves.

When he approaches a fly, he moves very slowly and carefully until he is within striking distance, and then he shoots out an arm to catch the fly with what appears to be a prickly "grasper" between the forearm and the biceps. He seems to have a voracious appetite, eating anything in the insect world that comes his way, including, I am afraid, his own species. Once I placed a couple in a box, in order to study them at leisure. When I looked again, some hours later, I came to the conclusion that one must have escaped: but on closer inspection I

found mangled legs on the floor, so that there was no doubt about the terrible business that had ensued.

After that, it is difficult to appreciate that such a creature in his lighter moments can cause real amusement to the watcher. Yet that is the fact. Sometimes you will see two of the mantis sitting on a branch or leaf engaged in what appears to be quite a friendly boxing match, conducted in the most professional style, and only ending when one or the other is knocked off. This is not a prelude to tragedy; it reminds me, rather, of the "greasy-pole" fights that one sees on ship-board.

II

The Monitor is a species of giant lizard. He likes to bask on a branch overhanging a river, and at the approach of an enemy—such as man—he will dive down, perhaps ten feet into the water. He is an expert swimmer and I have no doubt that he catches fish, although he is supposed to live on frogs, snakes, gnats and locusts—and crocodile eggs. It does not take

him long to dig up the eggs which Mrs. Crocodile has buried for hatching purposes in the sand, and—since the eggs are about the size of those of a hen—half a dozen will make him a satisfying meal.

It is a curious fact that although no one can know better than the monitor the ease with which buried eggs can be disinterred, the female monitor buries her own eggs in the same fashion for hatching purposes.

I must confess that I have a sneaking regard for this creature—because he keeps down the population of crocodiles!

12

There is a near relation of the monitor which is known in Africa as the Iguana. The two are so closely alike that they might easily be confused, but for the fact that while the monitor is found by the rivers and lakes the iguana lives many miles from water.

Once I was walking with a friend through some wooded country when we heard a sudden long hiss. We were both so much startled that

we jumped several yards in opposite directions. Then we gathered our courage and began to search for some creature that could have made the unusual noise, expecting to see a snake. For some time we were unsuccessful, but at last, happening to look up, I saw, some two feet above my head, this strange creature lying on a branch, rather in the attitude of the Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*. As I approached, he puffed himself out and then suddenly let the air escape with the loud hissing noise which had startled me just before.

When I attempted to handle him, he put out his tongue at me. And when I did at last pick him up, I discovered that he was far from docile and that although he did not attempt to bite me he had a tail which he could swing round very much as the crocodile does when striking an enemy off its feet.

13

Anyone who has the chance of examining a single Locust will find it to be a very beautiful insect, with coloring and strange markings on

the body which from time to time in the history of the world have been interpreted by seers and priests as messages signifying the wrath of Heaven. When the eggs are first hatched, the locusts are wingless so that they move by hopping: but when, after a few days, the wings have grown, the insects rise off the ground and then they look like silver snowflakes fluttering in the sunlight. That too is a beautiful sight.

But otherwise there is no beauty at all in the locusts or their ways.

For thousands of years they have been numbered among the plagues: and, it will be remembered that of the plagues of Egypt, they were among the last, destroying all that had survived the others. No better description of a swarm of locusts can possibly be given than that which will be found in Exodus—"they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt."

Even to-day the swarms continue: indeed, last year, in Central Africa, they were thicker and more numerous than any that living man can recall. No one who has not seen the sight can picture it, for the locusts are far beyond counting. Eighty years ago, around Algiers, some of the locusts were destroyed, the corpses were weighed, and a caculation was made of the total number destroyed. The result was the astounding figure of fourteen and three quarter millions! And that was merely the number which the inhabitants of Algiers succeeded in destroying.

When such a swarm arrives, it will be seen in the evening like a dense black cloud: and anyone who sees it approaching will know that it means utter destruction and ruin to all people whose livelihood depends on plants. Within a single night a green landscape will be turned into a desolate waste; branches of trees will be broken under the sheer weight of insects crowding upon them, crops will be eaten down to the roots, and streams will be choked by dead and quickly putrefying bodies. Anything that is green is the locusts' food, and the creatures—

especially the young ones—are ravenous, climbing over each other in their haste, and eating until nothing eatable is left.

Sometimes, when a swarm hovers in the sky, it can be driven away by noise; but sooner or later, somewhere, it will descend. I have seen many swarms of these insects in Africa—sights which if I related them would hardly be believed. I have seen, for instance, many millions of very young locusts hopping across the track of a railway, a heavy train trying to cross them, and the engine being stopped simply because the thousands and tens of thousands crushed beneath its wheels exuded a grease which prevented the wheels from getting a hold on the rails. And I have seen a sunlit landscape completely darkened by a swarm overhead; then the swarm being scattered by wind; then it uniting again and floating downwards; and then, in the morning, a great bare stretch of ruined country, without a leaf on a single tree, or one green blade of grass.

Africa is a wonderful country, rich and fertile. The swarming locust could turn it almost into a desert. One may wish to preserve nearly

all wild creatures, but the price to be paid if the locust is allowed to continue his ravages, is too great. He is a plague: and as a plague he must be dealt with, in order that the hundreds of other beautiful forms of wild life, both animal and vegetable, may survive.

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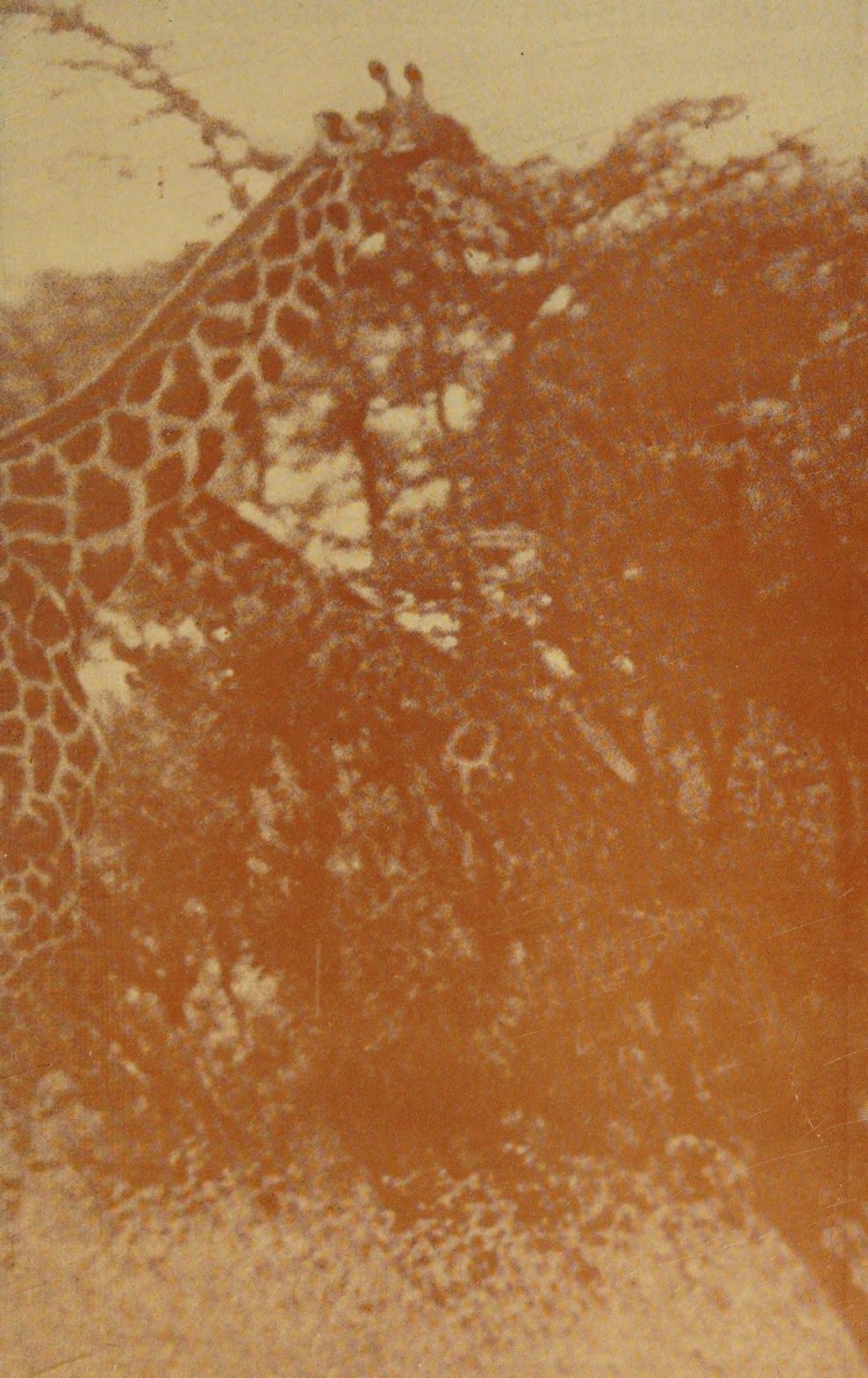
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